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Public opposition to the possible lifting of the night traffic ban on NH 766 through Bandipur is gathering momentum with local farmers questioning the government of the rationale to reconsider the original decision. » PAGE 5

Former PCCF's appeal to CM

BENGALURU
Former PCCF B.K. Singh has appealed to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to stop the grant of three acres of land each within the swampy grasslands in Nagarahole National Park and Tiger Reserve in Kodagu to claimants. » PAGE 6

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Govt. pushes hard to clear Waqf Bill

Minister says Opposition is misleading Muslims by telling them that govt. will 'snatch' their properties; Bill may be tabled in Parliament tomorrow

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

> Some people are saying that this Waqf Amendment Bill is unconstitutional. Waqf rules, its provisions have been in existence since before Independence... If the Waqf Act has been in existence since before Independence, then how can it be illegal?
>
> **KIREN RIJIJU**
> Union Minority Affairs Minister

Amid countrywide protests against the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday slammed the Opposition parties for allegedly misleading people from the Muslim community on the Bill.

Mr. Rijiju's statement came ahead of the Union government's proposed plan to table the Bill in Parliament on April 2. Sources in the government said that it is hopeful that the Bill will be passed. Government managers have reached out to allies to drum up support.

"Some people are saying that the Waqf Amendment Bill is unconstitutional. Waqf rules, its provisions have been in existence since before Independence... If the Waqf Act has been in existence since before Independence, then how can it be illegal?" he asked.

The Minority Affairs Minister said that the Opposition parties are misleading 'innocent Muslims' by telling them that the government will 'snatch' their graveyards and mosques.

"I would like to request everyone to please identify those leaders who are lying. These are the people who misguided the country during CAA. They had said that CAA was brought in to snatch the rights of Muslims," he said.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 12

Kathua hunt: 3 militants cornered by security forces

Peerzada Ashiq
JAMMU

Security forces on Monday night encircled three militants, suspected to have escaped from an encounter site in Kathua's Suffian village in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday. They were trapped in Panjtirthi area of Jathana on a tip-off.

Officials said the hiding militants opened fire on a search party and an intense encounter ensued. Additional forces have been rushed to the area. "The operation to neutralise the militants is continuing," an official said.

Earlier, the J&K Police detained six members of a family for questioning regarding the encounter. One of the family members was held last year for his alleged support to militancy in the area.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 12

After clampdown in India, return of Bangladeshis up

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The voluntary return of undocumented Bangladeshis is showing an increase after the government in December 2024 began a crackdown against foreigners staying illegally in India, following political changes in the neighbouring country, a source in the Union Home Ministry said.

Against 337 undocumented Bangladeshis who were apprehended while leaving India through the eastern border from January to July 2024, those apprehended in the subsequent months, from August 2024 till March 21 this year, stood at 906.

Letter to States

Out of this, 411 exits had been recorded in the past three months, data accessed by *The Hindu* show.

Data seen by *The Hindu* show 411 Bangladeshis exited in the past three months. FILE PHOTO

In December 2024, the Ministry wrote to all States to identify and deport undocumented Bangladeshi migrants. The Delhi Police, for instance, commenced a two-month drive in January to identify Bangladeshis living illegally in the country. Such drives were also conducted in Rajasthan, Telangana, Odisha, and other States.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 12

Pay more for milk, power from today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Consumers across Karnataka will pay more for milk, fixed charges for electricity, and tolls from today as the new financial year begins. In Bengaluru, citizens will also start paying a solid waste management cess.

Karnataka Milk Federation recently announced a hike of ₹4 per litre on its Nandini brand of milk and curd. Consumers across the State will also see an increase in electricity bills from April 1 as the fixed charges have gone up.

Motorists will have to pay higher toll from April 1 as the NHAI implements its annual toll revision across Karnataka. Over 60 toll plazas will see an increase in rates, including those on the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway and the toll plaza near Kempegowda International Airport.

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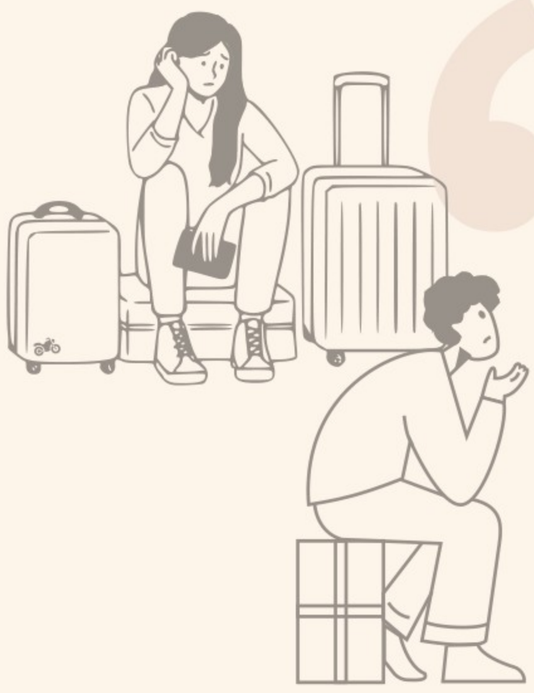

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M. VEDHAN

We are on the right track, we just need to keep our navigation bar very clear on where we want to go

Head coach Massimo Costantini hopes the pair of Maanav and Manush reach the quarterfinals; is quietly confident of India's chances and plans to organise camps ahead of the World Cup; feels Sharath can add value as a High-Performance Director

INTERVIEW

Massimo Costantini

K. Keerthivasan
CHENNAI

Massimo Costantini, the head coach of the Indian National team, is a patient man, explaining the nuances of shots to the players during their matches at the WTT Star Contender Chennai recently.

Never the one to raise his voice to the players, the Italian almost always makes his point clear in a soft manner.

In his third stint with the Indian team, Costantini is clear in what he wants to achieve: provide the Indian team with a great environment.

With the World Cup in Macao (China) from April 14 to 20 and the World championships (individuals) in Doha from May 17 to 25, the 66-year-old former paddler has his work cut out.

He spoke to The Hindu about the Indian team's performance in the recently concluded WTT Star Contender Chennai, Sharath Kamal's retirement and the need to have more National camps for women.
Excerpts:

What are your plans for your third stint as India head coach?

We have to prepare for the World Cup and the World Championships. The Worlds is an individual event, so it will be good for each and everyone.

For me, every tournament is a test at least. It's like an engine. If something is not working well, you need to adjust the brakes, change the tyres. It's a continual adjustment. And that's the job that I'm doing.

What do India's chances look like in the World Championships?

We have good potential in the men's doubles with Manav Thakkar and Manush Shah, but again it depends on the draw. If the pair has a good world ranking (it is currently ranked World No. 10), I think it can reach the quarterfinals. In mixed doubles, we have to prepare better. Manush and Diya Chitale are the highest-ranked Indians in the world standings at No. 13. Let's hope for the best.

In the women's section at the WTT Star Contender Chennai, none of the Indian players could reach the last eight. What do you make of that?

We are working to see how to put together a good team in the National camp because, recently, Sreeja Akula and Manika Batra had other tournaments, competing in the WTT Champions in China. They are off to Korea now.

We have the World Cup in Macao in April. We need to get them together and start thinking along the lines that we are stronger when together than when we are apart. The situation needs to be corrected at least: to be together more.

I'm planning to have more training camps because that is the key (space) where we can work all day and build certain abilities and a certain level of confidence. So that's what we need. This is not just for Manika Batra and Sreeja Akula, but for all other players to strengthen the National team environment.

How do you assess the performance of the Indian players in general in the Star Contender Chennai?

Overall, good. Manav Thakkar reached the semifinals, which is excellent. He will soon enter the top 50 in the world. Snehit (Suravajjula) is doing very well. To reach the quarterfinals is a great achievement for him, and that makes a total of five Indian players in the top 100.

We prepared quite well especially with the men, but with women, preparation was a little bit less. We had a training camp in Bengaluru and a training camp in Sweden prior to the WTT Star Contender Chennai event. The performances our players have managed make Indian table tennis stronger and inspire more confidence. We are going in the right direction and are on the right track. We just need to keep our navigation bar very clear about where we want to go.

K. MURALI KUMAR

There were quite a few young teenage girls who played in this tournament, making it to the main draw of the event in Chennai. One of them even took a game off World No. 10. Shin Yubin in the first round and her name is Divyanshi Bhowmick. Kavya Bhatt, who qualified for the main draw and entered the second round, beat a higher ranked player from Hong Kong, Wong Hoi Tung.

First of all, they don't surprise me. Because I know what they are capable of. We had training camps and competitions through which they have enhanced their skills. Plus, they are doing well in their own places with their own coaches. They are young.

I mean, who else should be more motivated than them when they are in a certain environment like this where all the lights are on them! You want to perform well. They know that. And this is a good attitude. So I'm very happy. And I think it's just the beginning.

Sharath Kamal has played an integral part in the rise of Indian table tennis. He has been with you in all your three stints. Tell us a bit about your relationship with him.

In all my three stints with the National team, Sharath has been there and has been essential all through. Sharath and I sat down to reminisce recently.

Life with the national side is very special and made of many things - arguments, celebrations, working on small details. Sharath was there through it all with humility and an open ear.

He's a guy who is ready to learn, he has an unbelievably generous soul and will do whatever he can do to help others, to help the national team. It's remarkable. We will miss him so much.

What do you attribute Sharath's longevity to?

It's similar to my career. I was in the Italian National team for a quarter of a century. What drives you is the will to do well for your country before doing well for yourself. Sharath epitomised this very typing all these years. I remember the gold medal by the men's doubles pair of Sharath and Subhajit Saha in the 2010 Delhi Commonwealth Games. Sharath has always been ready to grab opportunities and this is the perfect attitude. Ready to win, ready to give and ready to help. That is Sharath.

Sharath said he might embark on a new journey as a High-Performance Director. What do you think he needs to do to be successful?

He has unlimited skills. He needs to sit there and feel what the coach feels. How to suffer with the player, how to get the chemistry, how to get the connection. He knows life from the perspective of a player, but he doesn't know how it is from this side.

Things are completely different. You should not get emotional. You should know how to stay neutral. That said, he also needs to be extremely involved.

I think if he chooses the job of High-Performance Director of the Indian National team, he will be extremely helpful.

United in prayer

People offering *namaz* on the occasion of Id-ul-Fitr in Bengaluru on Monday, which marked the end of the fasting month of Ramzan. Prayers were offered at various mosques in the city. PTI

Commuters struggle as illegal parking at city bus stops continues

8,870 cases were booked in 2022, 5,499 in 2023, and 8,811 in 2024 for such violations; people say that buses are forced to halt in the middle of the road, delaying traffic and creating safety hazards

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Despite repeated crackdowns, illegal parking at Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) bus stops by autorickshaws, cabs, and private vehicles remains a persistent issue, causing traffic congestion and endangering commuters.

According to data provided by the police, 8,870 cases were booked in 2022, 5,499 in 2023, and 8,811 in 2024 for such violations. However, the problem persists, as autorickshaws and cabs continue to encroach upon the bus stops, making it difficult for BMTC buses to halt at designated points.

Regular commuters say that the illegal occupation of bus stops forces BMTC buses to stop in the middle of the road, delaying traffic and creating safety hazards.

Sangeetha N., a regular BMTC commuter from BTM Layout, highlighted the extent of the problem: "We've been seeing this for years. It's frustrating when the bus has to stop far from the designated spot because autos are blocking the way. Passengers are often left in the middle of the road trying to board the bus, which is inconvenient and dangerous."

Prasanna M. Kumar, a senior citizen from J.P. Nagar, echoed similar concerns: "There are times when bus drivers simply skip stopping at the bus shelter because autos are parked right in front of it. Instead, they stop in the middle of the road, forcing passengers like me to dash through traffic to board.

Many bus stops, among the 8,500 maintained by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, remain encroached upon, leaving passengers stranded on busy roads. FILE PHOTO

I've even seen bus drivers honking at the auto drivers to move, but it often escalates into heated argument. As a senior citizen, I find this situation incredibly difficult to board the bus safely."

Many bus stops, among the 8,500 maintained by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), remain encroached upon, leaving passengers stranded on busy roads.

During the recent Assembly session, Home Minister G. Parameshwara admitted that parking of non-BMTC buses at bus stops was leading to traffic jams and causing inconvenience to the public.

Additionally, Dr. Parameshwara said BMTC drivers had been instructed to strictly park buses only at designated stops.

They are also undergoing road safety training at the Traffic Management Centre. In 2023, 1,850 drivers were trained, followed by 9,619 in 2024. So far in 2025, 377 drivers have undergone the training. The government is taking steps to construct bus bays at select locations to alleviate the problem.

Acknowledge the issue, BMTC authorities have deployed Sarathi vehicles to patrol bus stops and ensure that autos and cabs do not park there illegally.

A senior BMTC official said: "We are aware of the growing problem of autos and private vehicles occupying bus stops. We have instructed our Sarathi patrol teams to ensure that these vehicles do not misuse bus stop spaces."

Bengaluru Traffic Police officials have been conducting regular drives to prevent illegal parking. "We regularly conduct drives to ensure that autos and cabs do not park in prohibited areas, especially near BMTC bus stops. We will increase our checks to ensure there are no parked vehicles near the bus stops," said a senior traffic police official.

Man found dead a month-and-a-half after mother's death

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 26-year-old man was found dead on Monday in Konaghatta village, Doddaballapur, just a month-and-a-half after his mother's death, both allegedly owing to debt-related distress.

The deceased has been identified as Rakshith Babu. He was found dead near Nandi Mori on Monday morning. He worked as a food delivery executive, serving multiple companies, said the police.

The Doddaballapur Rural police said that the family was caught in a severe debt crisis. About one-and-a-half months ago, Babu's mother allegedly ended her life at their house, reportedly owing to harassment from local moneylenders. The Doddaballapur Rural police have initiated an investigation.

(If you are in distress or having suicidal tendencies, please reach out to these 24/7 helplines: KIRAN 1800-599-0019 or Arogya Sahayavani at 104 for help)

BMTC to run special buses to Chinnaswamy Stadium for IPL games

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The services will be available on April 2, 10, 18, 24, and May 3, 13, and 17

Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) has announced special services for cricket fans travelling to and from M. Chinnaswamy Stadium for the TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 matches. The services will be available on April 2, 10, 18, 24, and May 3, 13, and 17.

To accommodate the surge in demand, BMTC will deploy buses on multiple routes connecting key areas of the city with the stadium. The designated routes include: SBS-1K: M. Chinnaswamy Stadium to Kadugodi (via HAL Road), G-2: Sarjapur, G-3: Electronic City (via Hosur Road), G-4: Bannerghatta Zoo, G-7: Janapriya Township (via Magadi Road), G-10: R.K. Hegde Nagar, Yelahanka (via Nagavara, Tannery Road), 317G: Hoskote, 13: Banashankari.

Rowdy sheeter Nepali Manja murdered

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Notorious rowdy sheeter Manjunath alias Nepali Manja was murdered late on Sunday near Gollahalli Main Road in the Hebbagodi police station limits.

Manja, who had a history of over 15 criminal cases, was attending a gathering with friends in a secluded area when the attack occurred, said the police.

According to police, assailants led by Jagga arrived on two motorcycles and launched a sudden assault on Manja with weapons. The attackers inflicted multiple stab wounds before fleeing from the scene. The Hebbogodi police suspect that the murder was motivated by long-standing rivalry and Jagga is also a local goon.

Recently, Manja had relocated with his family to Kunigal to distance himself from criminal associations. However, he returned to Anekal for the festival season.

Revised entry fee for sky theatre show at planetarium from today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium (JNP) will be revising the entry fee for the sky theatre show from Tuesday.

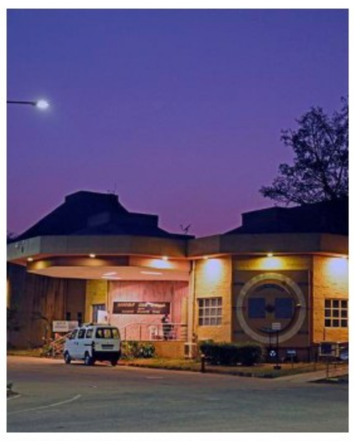
As per the revised charges, entry fee for adults is ₹100 per head from the existing rate of ₹75 per head. For children below the age of 16, the fee is ₹60 per head from the existing rate of ₹50.

For organised groups of school students, the fee is ₹50 per head from the existing rate of ₹40. For block bookings (210 seats) the revised fee for school students is ₹10,000 from the existing charge of ₹8,000, and, for others, the revised fee is ₹20,000 from the existing charge of ₹15,000.

JNP director B.R. Guruprasad said entry fee was previously revised in 2020.

"JNP, Bengaluru has emerged as one of the leading planetariums of India. The principal objective of the Bangalore Association for Science Education/JNP is to popularise science and provide non-formal science education," Mr. Guruprasad said.

The main attraction of the planetarium is the sky theatre where interesting shows are screened.



Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium director B.R. Guruprasad said the entry fee was previously revised in 2020. FILE PHOTO

E-paper edition

The Hindu offers more coverage of Bengaluru in the e-paper edition. (epaper.thehindu.com)

In the issue dated April 1, we take a look at the book 'Whose river is it anyway?' a graphic narrative of the Vrishabhavathi that delves into the collective memories, lived experiences and imaginations of the people who live and work along the river.

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SHILPA Ramamurthy, W/O: Srinivas Suddaguntepalya Gopal Reddy, R/O: No 5,7th Cross, 35th Main, Behind Silk Board, Kudlu, BTM Layout 2ndstg, Bommanahalli, Bengaluru – 560068. Have Changed my Name to Shilpa Srinivas, Affidavit dated on 29/03/25

I, No. JC-844443H, SUB Gopi T M, permanent resident of Thakkemaramveed, Vill & PO-Palayadnada, PS-Poyyolly, Teh-Badagara, Dist – Calicut, State- Kerala, declare that I have changed my daughter's name from Sasha (Old Name) to Sasha Gopinath (New Name) vide affidavit sworn before Notary Public R Basavaraja at Bengaluru dated 7th March 2025.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **MARY PRTHEEBA .J,** W/o. PHILIP NAVEEN KUMAR, RESIDING AT NEW NO. 283, OLD NO. 174/A-2, 1ST CROSS, MOTAPPANA PALYA, INDIRANAGAR, BENGALURU-560038, KARNATAKA, have changed my name to **MARY PRATHEEBA JEYARAJ,** vide affidavit dated: 29.03.2025 before Notary **N Narayana Swamy,** Bengaluru.

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NIT No.OSSC/Mktg(Hort)-23/2025

Short e-Tender Call Notice for Procurement of Black Pepper Rooted Cutting for Kharif-2025

OSSC Ltd. invites Short e-Tender only from registered Nursery Owner (and in case of GOI PSUs, their authorized Agencies) on item wise rate contract basis **for Procurement of Black Pepper Rooted Cutting for Kharif-2025** in double cover system through online mode only for the work below.

Name of the work	Purchase of Black Pepper Rooted Cutting for Kharif-2025
No of work	One
Availability of bid documents in portal	15.00 hours on dt.02.04.2025 to 17.00 hrs of dt.11.04.2025
Last date of receipt of tender in portal	17.00 hrs of dt.11.04.2025
Date and time of Opening of Bid	10.30 hrs of dt.15.04.2025

The detailed descriptions of crops, varieties, quantity, parameters, terms and conditions and other details of tender specified in the tender schedule would be made available in the e-Tender portal **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation can also be seen in the said website.

CAD-3004: Sd/- Managing Director, OSSC Ltd.
OIPR-01045/11/0056/2425

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NATIONAL BOARD OF EXAMINATIONS IN MEDICAL SCIENCES
(Autonomous body of the M/o. Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India)
NAMS Building, Medical Enclave, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi – 110029

Graduate Pharmacy Aptitude Test (GPAT) 2025

NOTICE

National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) shall conduct the Graduate Pharmacy Aptitude Test (GPAT) 2025 on **25th May 2025.**

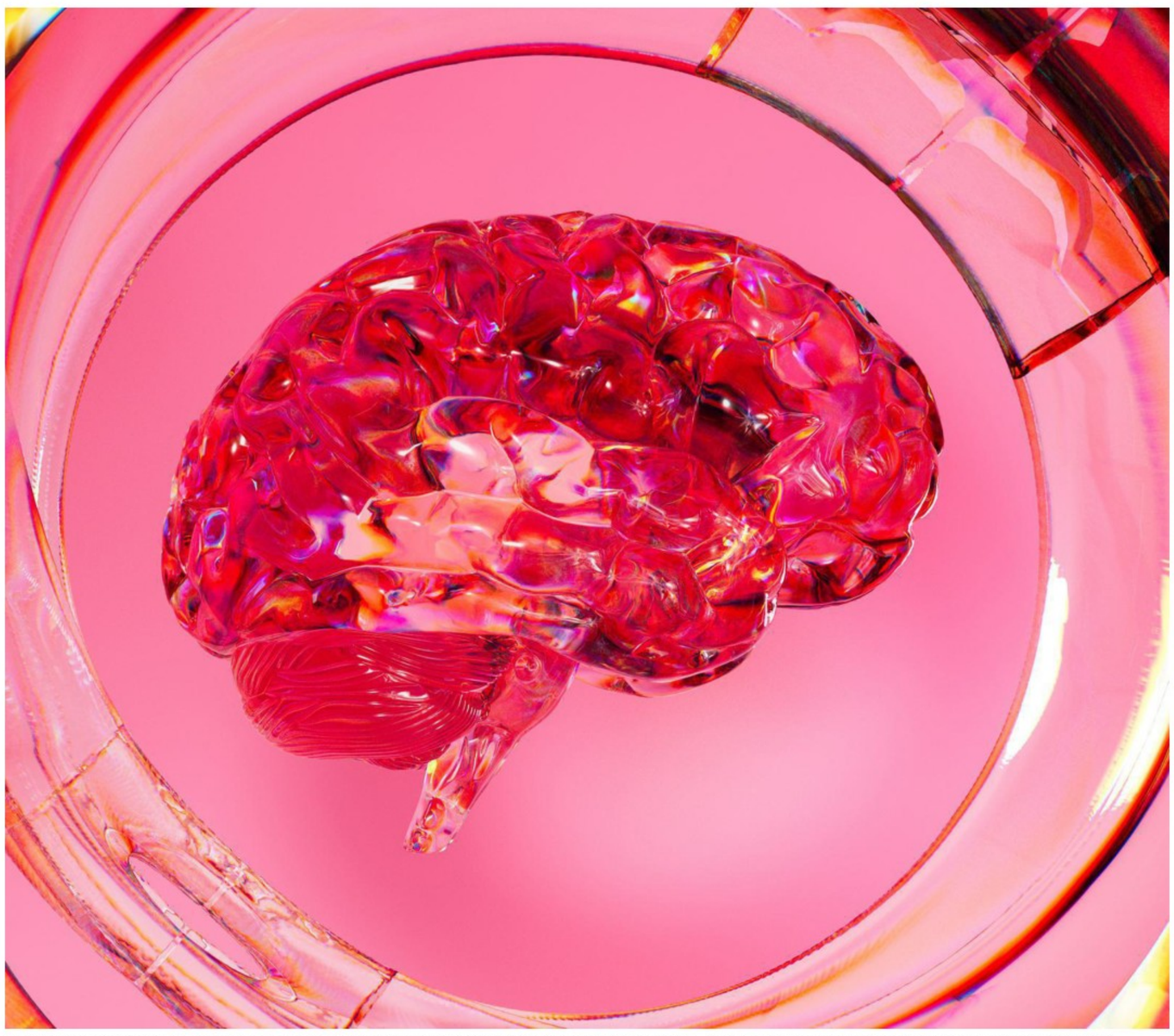
The online applications are being invited from **01st April 2025 to 21st April 2025** at NBEMS website:
https://natboard.edu.in/viewnbeexam?exam=gpat

Candidate Care Support: +91-7996165333
- Helpline Portal on applicant login page
- Communication Web Portal on NBEMS Website

Bipolar disorder: complex but surmountable by early diagnosis

It is useful to conceptualise the origins of mood disorders in terms of stress, gene-environment interactions, and circadian functioning. Proximal stressors include adverse childhood experiences; distal stressors seen in adulthood include financial difficulties, bereavement, and trauma

Alok Kulkarni



Bipolar disorder is highly heritable; 60-85% of the affliction can be attributed to genetic factors. But genes do not act independently of the environment. Representative illustration. MAREK PAVLIK/UNSPLASH

The second phase of India's National Mental Health Survey is currently underway. The first phase identified mood disorders as an important diagnostic category in terms of prevalence in India. March 30 is celebrated worldwide as World Bipolar Day.

Mood disorders are psychiatric disorders characterised by a pathological alteration in one's mood, energy, and activity levels. The two most common mood disorders are major depressive disorder and bipolar disorder. Major depressive disorder is characterised by a persistent and pervasive sadness of mood, anhedonia (disinterestedness in activities that were pleasurable before the onset of the affliction), easy fatigability, cognitive difficulties, hopelessness, worthlessness, inappropriate guilt, and crying spells. More severe forms include suicidal ideas, slowness of bodily movements and thinking, delusions, and hallucinations.

Major depressive disorder is one pole in the gamut of presentations of bipolar disorder. The other pole, which defines bipolar disorder in a way, is mania. Mania is typified by an elevated, expansive or irritable mood, higher energy levels, inflated self-esteem, decreased need for sleep, pressured speech, subjective experience that thoughts are racing ('flight of ideas'), being easily distracted, increased goal-directed activity, unrestrained buying sprees, and sexual indiscretions.

Normal mood fluctuations are specific to situations and last for short durations. For instance, one may feel down for some time after a difficult day at work. But people with mood disorders present with persistent pathological alterations in their mood and energy levels. These perturbations are not transient but last for weeks, months or longer and impair one's socio-occupational functioning.

Causes of mood disorders

The genesis of mood disorders is complex and multifactorial. The affliction comes to the fore during development and manifests as individuals mature. Bipolar disorder generally has its clinical onset between the ages of 15 and 30 but its origins go back to early life. An individual's vulnerability to mood disorders is likely to be genetically coded, as is the case with most psychiatric disorders.

That said, genetic vulnerabilities alone do not always suffice. Environmental factors play a crucial role in precipitating the affliction. There is a complex and dynamic interaction between one's genetic vulnerability and the environment. This is why clinicians evaluating people with mood disorders spend time understanding a person's early childhood experiences, developmental history, stressors, and life events. These critical windows during development act as triggers and maintaining factors for mood disorders.

It is useful to conceptualise the origins of mood disorders in terms of stress, gene-environment interactions, and circadian functioning. Proximal stressors include adverse childhood experiences such as abuse, loss, neglect, and domestic violence. Distal stressors seen in adulthood include a life-threatening illness, financial difficulties, unemployment, bereavement, violence, and trauma. Childhood maltreatment is associated with twice higher chances of receiving a psychiatric diagnosis. Studies have even shown abnormalities in the spermatozoa of victims of childhood maltreatment.

In bipolar disorder, negative life events are associated with depressive relapses while goal-attainment life events are associated with manic relapses.

Chronic stress is associated with dysregulation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis. When a person perceives stress, the hypothalamus releases the corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH). CRH stimulates the pituitary gland to release the adrenocorticotropic hormone (ACTH). ACTH moves to the adrenal glands, which then release cortisol, the stress hormone.

Cortisol primes the body to respond to stress. Once the stressor abates, the HPA axis shuts down its activity via a negative feedback loop, where cortisol levels signal the hypothalamus and pituitary to reduce CRH and ACTH release. Chronic stress dysregulates the HPA axis such that the negative feedback loop is disrupted. Cortisol keeps getting released even after the stressful event has gone, rendering a chronic low-grade inflammatory state in the brain and the body.

Bipolar disorder is highly heritable:

Environmental factors play a crucial role in precipitating the affliction. Clinicians evaluating people with mood disorders spend time understanding a person's early childhood experiences, developmental history, stressors, and life events

60-85% of the affliction can be attributed to genetic factors. But genes do not act independently of the environment. Genetic mechanisms likely involve thousands of genetic variants in reciprocal interaction with each other, the environment, and random factors. To date, no single candidate gene has been identified in the causation of psychiatric disorders. Likewise, neither neuroscience nor genetics has yet produced a laboratory test for mood disorders. Psychiatric disorders are inherently complex, polygenic, and multifactorial.

The circadian system coordinates the body's internal clock with the planet's 24-hour cycle. Bipolar disorder is characterised by marked disturbances in circadian rhythms – including body temperature and melatonin secretion – which are evident during particular mood episodes such as depression and mania as well as periods of remission. Researchers are yet to determine whether these perturbations are the causes or the effects of the mood dysfunction.

Diagnostic challenges

More often than not, bipolar disorder begins with periods of depression, and sometimes a decade may elapse before the onset of hypomanic or manic episodes. The average time from the onset of symptoms to the first diagnosis of bipolar disorder ranges from six to 10 years. Hypomania is difficult to pick up on clinically because patients do not always seek help during these episodes. They frequently lack insight into their condition and may even enjoy hypomanic or manic episodes, until they become debilitating.

Clinicians keep an eye out for the symptoms or tendencies of bipolar disorder in patients with early-onset of multiple brief periods of depression; a family history of bipolar disorder; with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder; with substance misuse; with abrupt onset and offset of depression; and who don't respond as expected to antidepressants.

Delayed diagnosis is common in bipolar disorder due to poor awareness and associated stigma. But with the right treatment, individuals can lead fulfilling and productive lives. Examples abound of people having overcome its challenges to chart fulfilling lives.

(Alok Kulkarni is a senior interventional neuropsychiatrist at the Manas Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences at Hubli in Karnataka. alokvkulkarni@gmail.com)

Researchers suggested that a Cs-137 source could be detected from about 100 m away. GETTY IMAGES

Laser allows long-range detection of radioactive materials

Vasudevan Mukunth

In a new breakthrough, a team of physicists from the US has successfully demonstrated a new way to detect radioactive materials using carbon-dioxide lasers – from a distance. The potential applications of this innovative technique span national defence and emergency response, where rapid, accurate detection from safe distances is paramount.

At the core of the new technique is a phenomenon called avalanche breakdown. When some material undergoes radioactive decay, the charged particles it releases travel through the air and ionise it, i.e. separate its positive and negative charges and create a state of matter called plasma.

The negative charges, or electrons, can be accelerated to collide with other atoms and release even more electrons. This is avalanche breakdown. The researchers used a carbon-dioxide laser emitting long wave infrared radiation at a wavelength of 9.2 micrometres to accelerate the electrons, and were able to detect alpha particles from a radioactive source located 10 m away. This improves the range in previous experiments by a factor of 10. (An alpha particle is a bundle of two protons and two neutrons.)

The electrons that are accelerated in the first step of avalanche breakdown are called seeds. In this experiment, each seed electron resulted in distinct balls of microplasma in the air that generated a measurable optical backscatter. Crucially,

This sets the stage to potentially expand avalanche-based laser detection techniques to identify gamma-ray radiation sources at greater stand-off distances

the researchers were able to amplify this backscatter as it travelled back through the laser system, substantially improving detection sensitivity. A compelling advantage of using long-wavelength lasers is their ability to drive electron avalanches, which in turn is crucial to detect very low concentrations of seeds. The laser's longer wavelengths also reduce the likelihood of undesirable ionisation effects that could otherwise mask the detection signal.

In the experiment, the researchers also used fluorescence imaging to further illuminate the dynamics within the plasma created by the laser-induced avalanches, allowing them to characterise in detail the seed density profiles. Then they developed a mathematical model that accurately predicted the backscatter signals based on these seed densities, validating the technique.

The advance sets the stage to potentially expand avalanche-based laser detection techniques to identify gamma-ray radiation sources at greater stand-off distances. Gamma rays, which some radioactive nuclides like caesium-137 emit, travel much farther in air than alpha particles, reducing the density of the ionisation they produce. Despite this challenge, the researchers suggested that a Cs-137 source could be detected from about 100 m away provided the laser focusing optics are scaled up. This would greatly surpass current detection capabilities.

But extending the detection range further also introduces notable difficulties. Using longer focal lengths to reach distances of around 1 km or more would require even larger optics and higher laser energies due to diminishing signal strengths. At such extended distances, the laser backscatter method – the primary approach tested here – is limited because the signal could become saturated by background radiation and atmospheric interference.

The team's findings were published in *Physical Review Applied* on March 4.

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THE SCIENCE QUIZ

Please send in your answers to science@thehindu.co.in

International Year of Quantum Science and Technology

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1
The _____ is a popular mathematical way to describe the state of a quantum system. The square of the amplitude of this entity describes the probability of finding the system in a particular state (Born rule). Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 2
Electrons are a type of particle called fermions. The state of every electron in an atom is described as a combination of four quantum numbers. Name the rule that prevents electrons from occupying the same quantum state at the same time, giving rise to the elements of the periodic table.

QUESTION 3
The Danish physicist Niels Bohr believed _____ to be a critical part of quantum mechanics. It described the idea that certain pairs of properties, such as position and momentum, couldn't be described simultaneously yet knowledge of both is required to understand the system. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 4
Y is an important part of quantum mechanics that is completely absent from classical mechanics. A 1935 paper by three scientists, including Albert Einstein, argued that its presence indicated quantum mechanics was an incomplete description of reality. Name Y.

QUESTION 5
Name the uniquely quantum mechanical property that allows a qubit inside a quantum computer to exist in one of three states: 1, 0 or a combination of 1 and 0.

Answers to March 27 quiz:
1. Hydrocarbon whose carbon bonds are at 90° – **Ans: Cubane**
2. Molecule type that describes bullvalene – **Ans: Fluxional**
3. Compound that changes colour under UV and visible light – **Ans: Azobenzene**
4. Cation controversial for ionic bond between three atoms – **Ans: Norbornyl**
5. Carbon allotrope consisting of 60 atoms – **Ans: Buckminsterfullerene**

Visual: **1.1.1-Propellane**

First contact: Suman Raul | Fathima Niloofar | Joe V.R. | Anmol Agrawal | Abhinandan Mohanty

Visual: Name this Dutch physicist who in 1948 predicted a peculiar quantum effect, experimentally confirmed later, that gives rise to a problem called stiction in nanotechnology. ANEFO (CC BY-SA 3.0)

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Man dies in bike accident

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

An accident in Sadashivanagar claimed the life of a 21-year-old man early on Monday. The victim was identified as Vijay Madiki from Assam.

Vijay and his friend Suhail were on their way home after purchasing new clothes for Id-ul-Fitr.

Suhail was driving the bike. A cover in which the clothes were kept got entangled in the bike's handle, causing him to lose control. Vijay fell and died on the spot, while Suhail sustained severe injuries.

Timings
BENGALURU

TUESDAY, APR. 01		
RISE	06:16	SET 18:31
RISE	08:22	SET 21:38
WEDNESDAY, APR. 02		
RISE	06:15	SET 18:31
RISE	09:18	SET 22:43
THURSDAY, APR. 03		
RISE	06:14	SET 18:31
RISE	10:17	SET 23:47

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	35	23
Mysuru	35	20
Bengaluru	34	21

Bengaluru Today
35°C Morning will be pleasant. Day will be warm. Night will be pleasant. Dry weather to prevail.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
35°C The weather will be warm. Night will be pleasant. Spell of light rain and thundershower with gusty winds may occur.

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THE HINDU
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Woman dies after cab rams scooter

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 24-year-old woman was killed and her relative injured, when a cab crashed into their scooter near Veerannapalya Road in Hebbal on Monday morning.

The victim, identified as Varsha from Govindarajanagar, was on her way to work at Manyata Tech Park. She was riding pillion while her uncle Rajesh was driving the scooter.

Metro work

The accident occurred around 7.55 a.m. when they were navigating a stretch where the road divider had been removed for metro construction.

As they attempted to cross, a cab from the opposite direction rammed their vehicle, said the police. Varsha suffered severe injuries and died on the spot, while Rajesh was rushed to a private hospital for treatment.

The Hebbal traffic police conducted an inspection and registered a case. Further investigation is under way, said DCP Sirigowri.

The accident also highlights the growing risks posed by unmarked road modifications owing to infrastructure projects, raising concerns about commuter safety in Bengaluru.

PUBLIC NOTICE
ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE

State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority, Karnataka has accorded Environmental Clearance for the proposed "Narayana Hospital" by M/s. Narayana Hrudayalaya Limited at **R. Sy. No. 3/1A** of Agara Village, Begur Hobli of Bangalore South Taluk & District **(File No.: SEIAA 158 CON 2024)** dated **10.03.2025** under the provision of EIA Notification, 14th September 2006.

Copy of the Clearance Letter is available with the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board & may also be seen on the PARIVESH Portal of MoEFCC.

Date: 01/04/2025 (Authorized Signatory)

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The e-learning challenge

While online education is not a failed experiment, it is far from realising its full potential

John J. Kennedy

Online education was once seen as a game-changer, promising accessibility, flexibility, and borderless learning. Platforms like SWAYAM, Coursera, edX, and Udemy have expanded learning opportunities for millions. However, low completion rates remain a major challenge. In India, less than 4% of SWAYAM students have completed their courses since its launch in 2017, while global MOOCs report completion rates of only 5-15%. Despite rising enrollments, retention is a challenge. A 2019 MIT-Harvard study found MOOC completion rates averaging just 3.13%. Coursera fares slightly better at 15% for paid courses but only 5% for free ones. EdX has completion rates of 10-12%.

This pattern reflects a global issue: attracting learners is easier than keeping them engaged. The parliamentary panel that studied the digital initiatives cites SWAYAM's outdated content, rigid teaching methods, poor infrastructure, and untrained instructors as key issues. Also, the digital divide has worsened accessibility. Oxfam India's 2022 report found that only 4% of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students and 7% of Other Backward Classes students have Internet-enabled computers.

Drawbacks

One of the most common criticisms of online courses is that the content is often outdated or irrelevant to learners' needs. In a rapidly evolving job market, learners seek skills that are immediately applicable. However, many online courses fail to keep pace with industry trends. Many courses follow rigid structures that don't account for diverse learner needs. Working professionals may struggle with fixed schedules, while students in rural areas face connectivity issues. The digital divide remains a major barrier. In India, only 24% of households have Internet access, according to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) 2017-18 report. Even among those with access, low bandwidth, lack of devices, and unreliable electricity hinder participation. Online learning also demands a high degree of self-discipline and motivation, which many learners lack. Teachers, too, struggle to make online courses engaging. The parliamentary panel noted that SWAYAM instructors face inadequate training, low compensation, and technical hurdles, undermining their effectiveness.

A key recommendation is to link online education with job placements. Currently, most platforms, including SWAYAM, lack robust mechanisms to connect learners with employers. This disconnect reduces the perceived value of online courses, especially for job-seekers. Global platforms often collaborate with top universities and industry leaders to offer cutting-edge content. Paid courses on platforms like Coursera see higher completion rates, suggesting that financial investment increases learner commitment. SWAYAM, being free, lacks this incentive. Additionally, global platforms offer certifications recognised by employers, adding value to their courses. SWAYAM's certifications, while recognised by some Indian universities, lack widespread industry acceptance.

Suggestions

The challenges to online education are significant but not insurmountable. Courses must be regularly updated to reflect industry trends and tailored to local contexts. For instance, SWAYAM could collaborate with Indian industries to address specific skill gaps. Instructors need better training to deliver engaging online content, including technical and pedagogical strategies. Governments and private players must work together to improve Internet access and affordability through initiatives like subsidised devices and community Internet centres. Gamification, interactive quizzes, and peer-to-peer learning can make courses more engaging, as seen with platforms like Duolingo. Establishing placement cells or partnering with recruiters can enhance the value of online courses. The parliamentary panel's recommendation to connect SWAYAM students with employers is a step in the right direction. Courses should also allow learners to progress at their own pace and choose modules aligned with their goals. Micro-credentials and stackable certificates can add further value.

Online education is not a failed experiment but is far from realising its full potential. It can become a powerful tool for inclusive and flexible learning with targeted interventions such as updating content, improving teacher training, bridging the digital divide, and linking education to employment. Abandoning it is not the solution; stakeholders must work collaboratively to address its shortcomings. As the world welcomes digital transformation, online education must evolve to meet the needs of learners and employers alike. Only then can it fulfill its promise of democratising access to quality education.

The writer is Professor and Dean, Christ University, Bengaluru.

SCHOLARSHIPS

South Asia Postgraduate Excellence Award
Offered by the University of Nottingham, the U.K.
Eligibility: Open to Indian citizens who hold an offer for a full-time Master's programme for 2025-26 and are classed as an overseas student for fee purposes.
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Application: Online
Deadline: April 30
www.b4s.in/edge/SAPE1

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Offered by the University of Glasgow, Scotland, the U.K.
Eligibility: Indian citizens who hold an unconditional offer for the September 2025 MBA program intake or a conditional offer contingent only upon their IELTS score.
Rewards: €18,750 one time
Application: Online
Deadline: July 21
www.b4s.in/edge/UGAS4

University of Derby GREAT Scholarships
Offered by the University of Derby, the U.K., in partnership with the British Council and the GREAT Britain Campaign.
Eligibility: Indian citizens who hold an offer from the University of Derby for a PG programme and are classified as an international student for tuition fee purposes.
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Courtesy: buddy4study.com

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of reported deaths due to the Myanmar earthquake

2,056 The death toll from a major earthquake in Myanmar has risen to 2,056, the ruling junta said, with more than 3,900 people injured. A statement from a junta spokesperson said that 270 more people were still missing. AFP

Funding received from the IMF for Ukraine's state budget

400 in $ million. Ukraine's Prime Minister said that Ukraine's state budget received the amount from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after the seventh review of Extended Fund Facility Arrangement. The total IMF support under this program is over $10 billion. REUTERS

The number of Afghans Pakistan plans to expel this year

3 In million. Pakistan plans to expel three million Afghans from the country this year, as the deadline for them to voluntarily leave the capital and surrounding areas expired on Monday. It's the latest phase of a nationwide crackdown launched in 2023 to expel foreigners living in Pakistan illegally. AP

Number of drones Russia launched against Ukraine

131 The Ukrainian air force said on Monday that Russia launched 131 drones and two Iskander-M ballistic missiles during overnight attacks. The air force shot down 57 drones, and another 45 drones did not reach their targets, likely due to electronic countermeasures, it said. REUTERS

The increase in loan sanctions by IREDA in FY25

27 In per cent. State-owned Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) reported a 27% year-on-year rise in loan sanctions to ₹47,453 crore in 2024-25. It had sanctioned loans worth ₹37,354 crore in the previous year. PTI

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Why are tensions high in the Arctic?

Who are the members of the Arctic Council? Why has the Arctic region become an area of interest now? What is the conflict around the Northwest Passage? How has Russia made its presence known in the region?

EXPLAINER

Franciszek Snarski

The story so far:

International observers have raised concerns about escalating tensions in the Arctic, warning that if left unchecked, they could eventually spark conflict in the region.

What is happening?

The Arctic, the northernmost area of the planet, has remained largely isolated for centuries. However, as climate change accelerates the melting of ice caps, new strategic opportunities are emerging for global powers. Beneath the frozen landscape lie untapped reserves of natural resources such as fossil fuels, rare earth elements, phosphates, and copper as well as lucrative fishing grounds.

Most of these resources are currently inaccessible due to the year-round ice barrier, but as climate change destroys the Arctic environment, these resources and nearby trade routes will become increasingly viable. Unlike the Antarctic, which is demilitarised and environmentally protected by a dedicated international treaty, the Arctic lacks similar legal safeguards and is primarily governed by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This allows nations to claim territories in the region and deploy military infrastructure. In recent years, overlapping maritime claims and military posturing have exacerbated tensions.

Who is in control?

The various islands and coastal areas in the Arctic are controlled by eight countries – Canada, Denmark (through Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the U.S. Together, these nations form the Arctic Council, an international body tasked with protecting the environment, conducting scientific research, and safeguarding the interests of indigenous peoples in the region. These nations exercise sovereignty over the Arctic land and can also exploit resources within their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). The waters between these territories fall under international jurisdiction, ensuring freedom of navigation.

According to UNCLOS, nations can extend their claims to the seabed beyond the 200-nautical-mile EEZ if they can prove that the area is a natural prolongation of their continental shelf. Canada, Denmark, and Russia have all submitted overlapping claims to the Arctic seabed to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. Despite these territorial declarations, infrastructure in the Arctic remains underdeveloped, with only a few operational ports along the coast. Among the Arctic Council members, Russia is the only country with a significant fleet of icebreakers, including one which is nuclear-powered, capable of navigating through the region's treacherous sea ice.

Where do the tensions arise?

For months, news headlines have reported on U.S. President Donald Trump's renewed interest in acquiring Greenland from Denmark. He has described the world's largest island as a matter of " national security" and has questioned the legitimacy of Denmark's sovereignty over the territory. Greenland, which has been under Danish control for over 300 years, also hosts the U.S. Pituffik military base. In January, following Mr. Trump's renewed interest, Denmark's prime minster Mette Frederiksen has pledged to bolster Greenland's security and embarked on a tour of European capitals to seek support from allies.

Additionally, tensions between the U.S. and Canada have risen following Mr. Trump's controversial comments about annexing Canada. Both nations have long disputed the status of the Northwest Passage, a potential Arctic shipping route that winds through Canada's Arctic Archipelago. Ottawa considers the passage part of its internal waters, granting it control over navigation, while Washington insists it falls under international jurisdiction, which means that any nation has freedom of navigation in the Passage.

Concerns over potential conflict also extend to Russia and the remaining Arctic Council members. These members, apart from Russia, all belong to NATO. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, relations within the Council have become increasingly strained. Russian officials, including Defence Committee of State Duma member Andrei Gurulyov, have suggested that Norway's Arctic island of Svalbard should fall under Russian control. Meanwhile, observer states of the Arctic Council, including India, are closely monitoring developments. The U.K., for instance, has repeatedly emphasised the strategic importance of the Greenland-Iceland-U.K. (GIUK) gap, a critical choke point for NATO's naval defences. This passage is the only feasible route for Russian submarines attempting to access the Atlantic to potentially disrupt NATO shipping in case of conflict, making it a focal point of Western military planning.

Why does the Arctic matter so much?

Aside from ongoing resource extraction, interest in the Arctic surged following a 2009 U.S. Geological Survey report estimating that the region holds 13% of the world's undiscovered oil reserves and 30% of its untapped natural gas reserves. Most of these resources lie beneath the seabed, making maritime claims highly significant. Greenland also harbours some of the world's richest deposits of rare earth elements, which drew significant investment interest from Chinese companies in the early 2020s. However, many of these projects were later suspended due to environmental concerns or U.S. political pressure.

The melting of Arctic sea ice has also prompted interest into the opening of new commercial trade routes. The Northeast Passage, which runs along Russia's Arctic coast, is particularly critical for Chinese trade. This route, stretching from the Bering Strait to Norway, could reduce the maritime distance between East Asia and Europe by approximately 8,000 kilometres compared to the traditional route through the Suez Canal. Navigating commercial shipping through this passage could save Beijing billions in transportation costs. However, the so-called Polar Silk Road would require Russia to grant Chinese ships access to its Arctic ports, a prospect Moscow has so far approached with caution.

What lies ahead?

Aside from political declarations and territorial claims, some nations have taken concrete steps to assert their Arctic ambitions. In 2007, Russia sent the MIR-1 submarine to the North Pole to plant a Russian flag on the seabed beneath the Arctic ice cap – a symbolic demonstration of its presence and capabilities. Moscow has also maintained a number of military bases in the Arctic, most of them dating back to the Soviet era. In 2022, it conducted joint naval exercises with Beijing in the East China Sea, which indicated strategic implications for Arctic security.

China has also steadily become more vocal about its Arctic interests, declaring itself a 'Near-Arctic State' in 2018 and planning the construction of its first nuclear-powered icebreaker. Since Sweden and Finland joined NATO following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the alliance has intensified its military presence in the region, including large-scale exercises near the Russian border in Finland in 2024. Analysts have pointed out NATO's limited operational capabilities in the Arctic, raising concerns about strategic imbalances. As temperatures continue to rise, tensions in the melting Arctic may soon reach a boiling point.

Franciszek Snarski is an intern at The Hindu.

THE GIST

- The Arctic, the northernmost area of the planet, has remained largely isolated for centuries. However, as climate change accelerates the melting of ice caps, new strategic opportunities are emerging for global powers.
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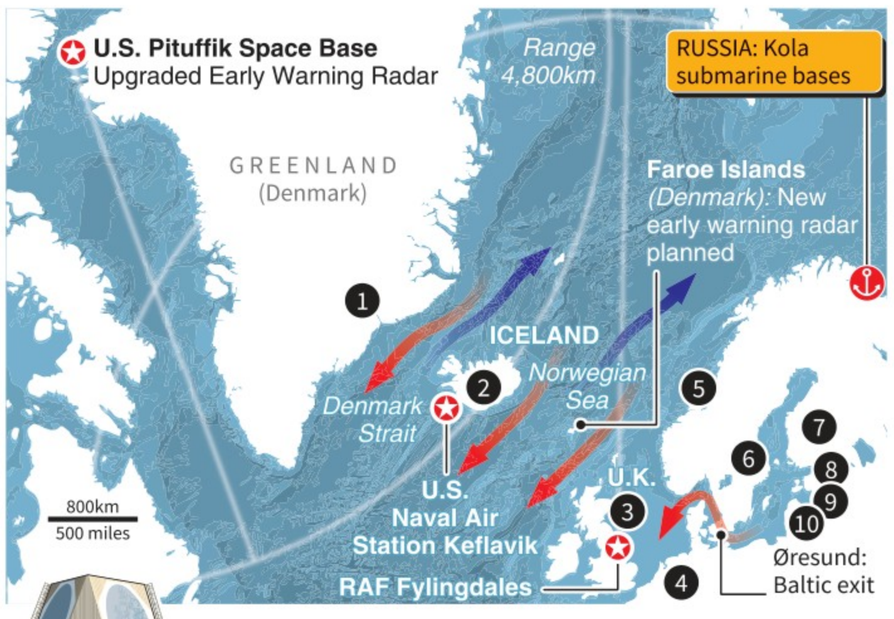
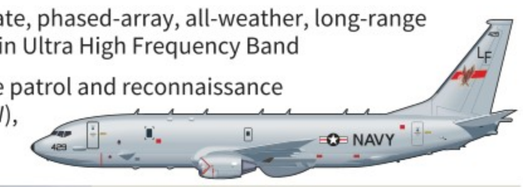
Ice cold war

The melting of Arctic sea ice has prompted renewed interest in the region. The U.K. has repeatedly emphasised the strategic importance of the Greenland-Iceland-U.K. (GIUK) gap, a critical choke point for NATO's naval defences



UEWRs: Solid-state, phased-array, all-weather, long-range radar, operating in Ultra High Frequency Band

Boeing P-8A Poseidon: Maritime patrol and reconnaissance for Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), based out of Keflavik



Jan 2025: Russian spy vessel Yantar in U.K. waters

NORDIC WARDEN NATO Joint Expeditionary Force			
1	Denmark	6	Sweden
2	Iceland	7	Finland
3	U.K.	8	Estonia
4	Netherlands	9	Latvia
5	Norway	10	Lithuania

Sources: IISS, Geopolitical Monitor Picture: army-news.ru © GRAPHIC NEWS

New complications: A polar bear is seen on ice floes in the Franz Josef Land archipelago in 2021. AFP

BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS
BENGALURU BRANCH OFFICE

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IV) Fee for ISI mark products certification-Scheme-I: **https://www.bis.gov.in/product-certification/product-certification-fee/**
V) IS wise testing facility & testing charges : **https://lims.bis.gov.in/home/search_is_number/**
VI) Product certification process-Scheme-I: **https://www.bis.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/GrantofLicence-Guidelines-04Feb2025.pdf**
VII) Online portal for application for ISI mark license **www.manakonline.in** :
VIII) Link for OTR registration Portal-Scheme-X: **https://www.bis.gov.in/scheme-x-certification/registration-portal-otr/**

Sr. No.	Ministry/ Department	Product	Indian Standard	Enforcement date
1	Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals	Polycarbonate	IS 14434 : 1998	12-Mar-25
2	Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals	Beta Picoline	IS 16112:2013	13-Mar-25
3	Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals	Sodium Tripolyphosphate, Anhydrous, Technical	IS 6100:1984	13-Mar-25
4	Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals	Pyridine	IS 8058:2018	13-Mar-25
5	Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals	p-Xylene	IS 17370: 2020	19-Mar-25
6	Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals	Polyurethanes	IS 17397 (Part 1): 2020/ISO 16365-1:2014	19-Mar-25
7	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Fasteners – Cross Recessed Drilling Screws with Tapping Screw Thread Part 1 Pan Head	IS 18471 (Part 1) : 2023/ ISO 15481:1999	20-Mar-25
8	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Fasteners – Cross Recessed Drilling Screws with Tapping Screw Thread Part 2 Countersunk Head	IS 18471 (Part 2) :2023/ ISO 15482:1999	20-Mar-25
9	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Fasteners – Cross Recessed Drilling Screws with Tapping Screw Thread Part 3 Raised Countersunk Head	IS 18471 (Part 3) :2023/ ISO 15483:1999	20-Mar-25
10	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Fasteners – Hexagon Washer Head Drilling Screws with Tapping Screw Thread	IS 18476 : 2023/ ISO 15480:2019	20-Mar-25
11	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Cross Recessed Tapping Screws: Part 1 Pan Head	IS 18480 (Part 1) :2023/ ISO 7049 : 2011	20-Mar-25
12	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Cross Recessed Tapping Screws Part 2 Countersunk Flat Head	IS 18480 (Part 2) :2023/ ISO 7050 : 2011	20-Mar-25
13	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Cross Recessed Tapping Screw Part 3 Raised Countersunk Oval Head	IS 18480 (Part 3) :2023/ ISO 7051 : 2011	20-Mar-25
14	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Pan Head Screws With Type H or Type Z Cross Recess – Product Grade A	IS 7483 : 2018/ ISO 7045 : 2011	20-Mar-25
15	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Countersunk Flat Head Screws (Common head Style) With Type H or Type Z Cross Recess – Product Grade A Part 1 Steel Screws of Property Class 4.8	IS 7485 (Part 1) : 2018/ ISO 7046 -1 : 2011	20-Mar-25
16	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Countersunk flat head screws (common head style) with type H or Type Z Cross Recess – Product Grade A part 2 Steel Screws of Property Class 8.8, Stainless Steel Screws and Non – Ferrous Metal Screws	7485 (Part 2) : 2018/ ISO 7046-2 : 2011	20-Mar-25
17	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Raised countersunk head screws (Common Head Style) with type H or type Z cross recess – Product grade A	IS 7486 : 2018/ ISO 7047 : 2011	20-Mar-25
18	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Drywall Screws – Specification	IS 18507 : 2024	20-Mar-25
19	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Chipboard Screws – Specification	IS 18508 : 2024	20-Mar-25
20	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Cross-recessed Countersunk Head Wood Screws – Specification	IS 18509 : 2023	20-Mar-25
21	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Chain Pipe Wrenches	IS 4123:1982	24-Mar-25
22	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Open Ended Slugging Wrenches (Spanners)	IS 4508:1992	24-Mar-25
23	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Ring Slugging Wrenches (Spanners)	IS 4509:1992	24-Mar-25
24	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Single-ended Open-jaw Adjustable Wrenches	IS 6149:1984	24-Mar-25
25	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Open-Jaw Wrenches (Spanners)	IS 2028:2004	24-Mar-25
26	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Ring Wrenches (Spanners)	IS 2029:1998	24-Mar-25
27	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Pipe Wrenches –General Purpose	IS 4003 (Part 1): 1978	24-Mar-25
28	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Pipe Wrenches – Heavy Duty	IS 4003 (Part 2): 1986	24-Mar-25
29	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Combination Side Cutting Pliers	IS 3650:1981	24-Mar-25
30	Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals	Ethyl Acrylate	IS 14708:1999	31-Mar-25
31	Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals	Vinyl Acetate Monomer	IS 12345:1988	31-Mar-25
32	Ministry of Textiles	Textiles – Flat woven webbing slings made of man-made fibres for general services	IS 15041:2001	01-Apr-25
33	Ministry of Textiles	Geosynthetics — Synthetic Polymer RopeGabions for Coastal and Waterways Protection — Specification	IS 17880 :2022	01-Apr-25
34	Ministry of Textiles	Textiles — Manila Ropes — Specification	IS 1084:2005	01-Apr-25
35	Ministry of Textiles	Fibre Ropes — Polyester — 3-, 4-, 8- and 12- Strand Ropes	IS 11066:2022	01-Apr-25
36	Ministry of Textiles	Textiles — Composite Synthetic Fibre Ropes — Specification	IS 14928:2001	01-Apr-25
37	Ministry of Textiles	Mixed Polyolefin Fibre Ropes	IS 14929: 2022	01-Apr-25
38	Ministry of Textiles	Steel wire ropes – Fibre main cores – Specification	IS 1804:2004	01-Apr-25
39	Ministry of Textiles	Fibre Ropes — Polyamide — 3-, 4-, 8- and 12- Strand Ropes	IS 4572:2022	01-Apr-25
40	Ministry of Textiles	Fibre Ropes — Polypropylene Split Film, Monofilament And Multifilament (PP2) and Polypropylene High-Tenacity Multifilament (PP3) —3-, 4-, 8- and 12- Strand Ropes	IS 5175:2022	01-Apr-25
41	Ministry of Textiles	Fibre Ropes — Polyethylene —3- And 4-Strand Ropes	IS 8674 : 2013	01-Apr-25
42	Ministry of Textiles	Fibre Ropes Of Polyester / Polyolefin dual Fibres	IS 17609 : 2021	01-Apr-25
43	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Stainless Steel Utensils	IS 14756:2022	01-Apr-25
44	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Wrought Aluminium Utensils	IS 1660:2009	01-Apr-25
45	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Stainless Steel Sinks for Domestic Purposes	IS 13983:1994	01-Apr-25
46	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Round Open Top Sanitary Cans for Foods and DrinksTinplate	IS 9396 (Part 1): 1987	01-Apr-25
47	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Aluminium cans for beverages	IS 14407:1996	01-Apr-25
48	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Safety or household and similar electrical appliancesparticular requirements – commercial dispensing appliances and vending machine	IS 302 (Part 2/Sec 75): 2018	01-Apr-25
49	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Aluminium alloy tubes for irrigation purposes -welded tubes	IS 7092 (Part 1):1992	01-Apr-25
50	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Aluminium alloy tube for irrigation purposes – extruded tube	IS 7092 (Part 2):1987	01-Apr-25
51	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	EC Grade Aluminium Rod produced by Continuous Casting and Rolling	IS 5484:1997	01-Apr-25
52	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Wrought aluminium and aluminium alloy bars, rods and sections (For General Engineering Purposes)	IS 733:1983	01-Apr-25
53	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Wrought aluminium and aluminium alloys, forging stock and forgings for general engineering purposes	IS 734:1975	01-Apr-25
54	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Wrought aluminium and aluminium alloy plate for general engineering purposes	IS 736:1986	01-Apr-25
55	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Wrought aluminium and aluminium alloy sheet and strip for general engineering purposes	IS 737:2008	01-Apr-25
56	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Wrought aluminium and aluminium alloy wire for general engineering purposes	IS 739:1992	01-Apr-25
57	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Wrought aluminium and aluminium alloy rivet stock for general engineering purposes	IS 740:1977	01-Apr-25
58	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Wrought aluminium and aluminium alloy bars, rods, tubes, sections, plates and sheets for electrical applications	IS 5082:1998	01-Apr-25
59	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Aluminium and aluminium alloy foil for pharmaceutical packaging	IS 16011: 2012	01-Apr-25
60	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade	Aluminium composite panel	IS 17682: 2021	01-Apr-25

FOR FURTHER ENQUIRES PLEASE CONTACT BIS BANGALORE BRANCH OFFICE.

Address: Opp. Jalahalli Metro, Peenya Indistrial Area 1st Stage, Tumkur Rd, Vivekananda Nagar, Peenya, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560058. Email Address: bnbo@bis.gov.in Phone: 080-28398860

CACHE

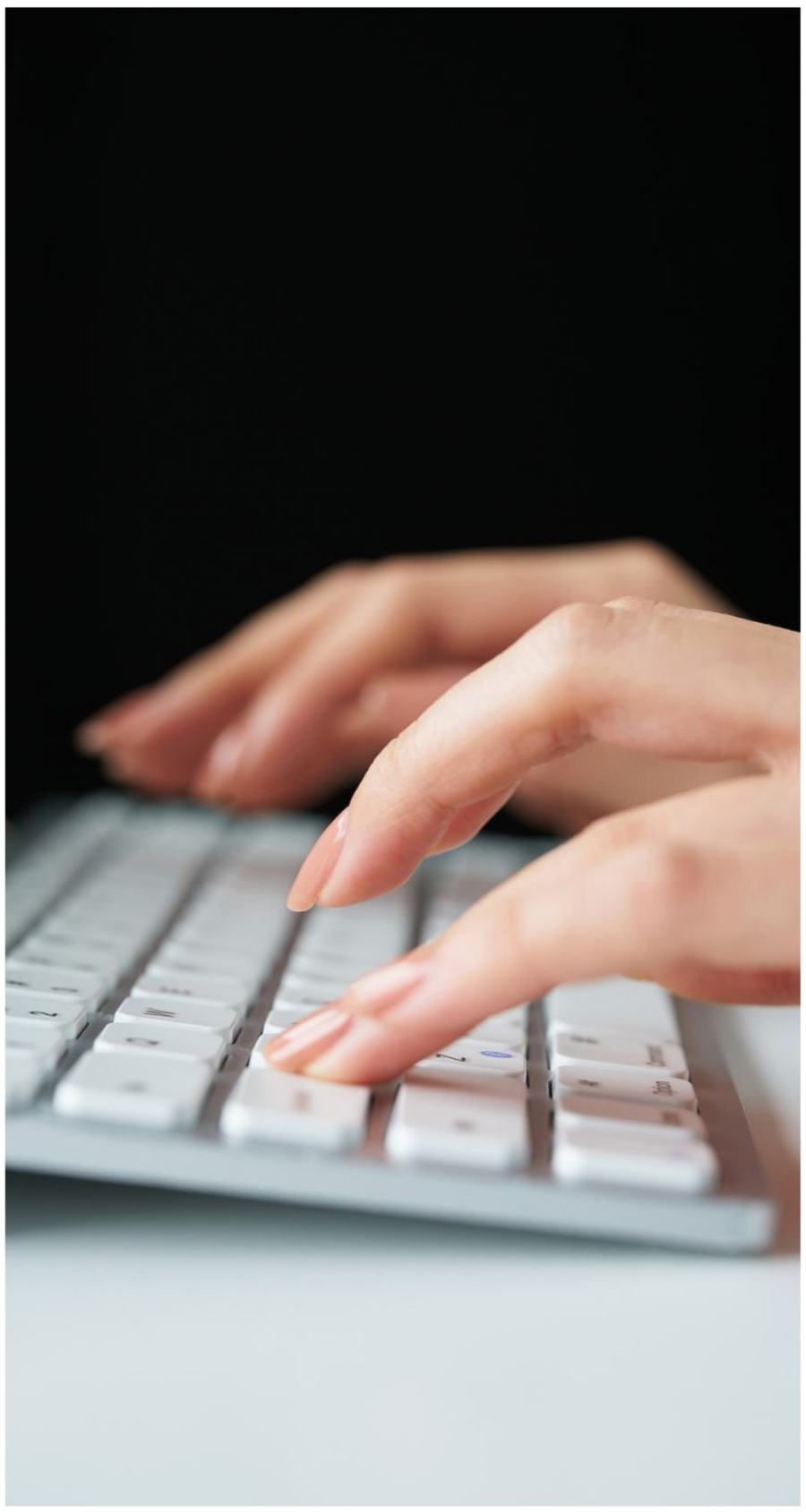
What is vibe coding, and how does it help non-coders?

When it comes to non-programmers, vibe coding can be a fun way to generate code for personal projects without formally learning the more technical parts of the skill

Sahana Venugopal

The story so far:

In February, OpenAI co-founder and former Tesla employee Andrej Karpathy described a coding process by which he commanded a Large Language Model (LLM) to generate code. He ran the results, copy-pasted content, and let the system figure out errors so he could surrender to the "vibes" of coding instead of actually focusing on the highly technical details of code creation. "There's a new kind of coding I call 'vibe coding', where you fully give in to the vibes, embrace exponentials, and forget that the code even exists. It's possible because the LLMs (e.g. Cursor Composer w [sic] Sonnet) are getting too good," Mr. Karpathy posted on X. And so, "vibe coding" was coined. The term has taken on a life of its own after AI companies released a series of new models designed to help users generate code, even if they don't know coding.



GETTY IMAGES

How does vibe coding work?

Think of a digital tool you would like to build, or a virtual task you might like to carry out, like building an AI model that helps you learn a new language, developing an app to remind you to drink water every hour, designing a personal website with an attractive video playing in the background, or even alphabetising a list of 500 names in an Excel sheet. To a non-coder, these are daunting tasks. One may need to hire experts, carry out extensive research independently, look for workarounds that do not involve coding, or even just bite the bullet and learn how to code. With generative AI tools, users can now build an app by typing text prompts describing the kind of code they want. All they have to do is simply copy and paste the code to get the desired output. But the outcome isn't always what one expected.

For example, we asked an AI tool to generate Javascript code for a pop-up that would ask users which pizza flavour they hated the most, and praise the user's "good taste" if their answer included the term "pineapple" anywhere. While the code for this request was successfully generated, the AI tool added some extra code so that the system would comment "Interesting choice!" to users who provided other pizza flavours. This was something the original user forgot to consider.

Though a beginner can run such codes, they will have no idea whether the code generated by AI could be shorter, more efficient, or tweaked to be more user-friendly. In essence, we ran the AI-generated code, but neither created nor thought about its structure.

What are advantages of vibe coding?

When it comes to non-programmers, vibe coding can be a fun way to generate code for personal projects without formally learning the more technical parts of the skill. Vibe coding is also an option for those who dislike the coding process but require it for low-stakes projects and low-risk tasks. Vibe coding can expose newbies to a dizzying range of computer languages, coding methodologies, technical uses, and problem-solving approaches in order to ignite their interest in learning how to code the traditional way.

For programmers who have a basic idea of what to do, vibe coding can help complete simple projects, identify basic errors, or implement quick bug fixes to speed up the development process. Again, this applies to low-stakes scenarios where any coding mistakes and omissions will not lead to catastrophic consequences.

In the case of experts and highly trained software developers, vibe coding can be used in conjunction with traditional coding methods in order to channel one's time or energy into those tasks that require the most intervention, so that minor or more generic parts of the workflow are handled by the machine. Mr. Karpathy himself noted that generating code with AI was "not too bad for throwaway weekend projects." He shared a basic game and a small AI assistant/reading guide that he built when vibe coding.

What are the disadvantages?

Vibe coding becomes a major problem as well as a massive security risk when it is seen as a way to replace experienced human coders with amateurs or untrained coders who give orders to AI chatbots instead of coding from scratch or understanding existing codebases.

This is because no code exists in a vacuum. Enterprise-level codes are painstakingly written and stress-tested to serve specific business, medical, educational, scientific, or technological needs. While human project managers and coders can precisely frame how the code needs to take shape in order to best serve a specific use case, an AI code generator may not understand the larger context of what it is creating. In other words, a gen AI tool may indeed produce the code that the user requested, but this generated code might be too slow to run, too expensive to maintain, and too long to scan regularly for security risks. This will require further fixes and customisation in the future, either by the AI model or even a human.

Mr. Karpathy himself noted that AI-generated code "grows beyond my usual comprehension, I'd have to really read through it for a while." Similarly, a product such as an app or a website that relies on huge banks of AI-generated code created with just "vibes" will be harder – and more expensive – for humans to maintain and upgrade at periodic intervals. Though experienced users like Mr. Karpathy can review their AI-generated code, spot errors, shorten it, plug security vulnerabilities, increase speeds, edit the text prompts, or carry out other advanced processes, untrained vibe coders will not be able to make sense of the letters, numbers, and symbols in the code.

Another major disadvantage of AI-generated code is that it is difficult to hold someone responsible when there are incidents such as major bugs or security exploits.

On a separate note, the very idea of AI-generated code may be abhorrent to those who see coding as a creative art form. This is similar to the way many creators object to AI-generated stories, music, or art. Other critics have claimed that vibe coders are simply copying or scraping older codes generated by other humans, raising ethical and plagiarism concerns when such machine-generated code is used in competitions, hackathons, job applications, or funding ventures.

Will vibe coding replace traditional coding?

This is highly unlikely. AI coding tools are still highly experimental at this point in time. Though machine-generated code is being used to build everything from apps to AI models, their generators are still prone to making mistakes or producing unwieldy code due to a lack of context regarding why the code is being generated. Furthermore, it is exceedingly reckless to turn over your entire database to an LLM just to give it more context for basic code generation. However, AI coding tools are rapidly improving, with offerings like Cursor considering the user's context and their coding style.

The essence of vibe coding is that the coder is not engaging seriously with their results and lacks line-by-line comprehension of their own code. While such a half-baked approach may work out for playful apps or games meant for personal use, businesses and enterprises that serve real users need their code to be coherent to those who make it and manage it. Mr. Karpathy himself noted that vibe coding had an element of laziness and involved making low-intelligence queries. "I ask for the dumbest things like "decrease the padding on the sidebar by half" because I'm too lazy to find it. I "Accept All" always, I don't read the diffs anymore. When I get error messages I just copy paste them in with no comment, usually that fixes it," he had posted on X.

It is not likely that well-established or well-funded companies would allow their products to be built in such a shoddy fashion. Vibe coders also cannot compete with professional human coders who leverage AI coding in a skilled manner. But as an increasing number of codebases become AI-generated, it is high time to scrutinise the viability of vibe coding.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subramanian
S. Upendran

"Do you think your boss will give you a raise?"

"I don't know. I'm afraid to even think about it."

"You know, sometimes you say 'afraid to' and sometimes 'afraid of'. When do you use which?"

"You normally use 'afraid of' when you're sacred of someone or something. For example, many children are afraid of the dark. Hyenas are afraid of lions."

"Can I say, some of the best batsmen in the world are afraid of Anil Kumble?"

You most certainly can. It is also possible to say, most batsmen in the world are afraid to face Anil Kumble."

" 'Afraid to face'? When do you use 'afraid to'?"

"It is generally used when you're sacred of doing something."

"I'm afraid to ask my boss for a raise. The Vice-Chancellor is afraid to ask the striking students to go back to class."

" 'Afraid to' also means 'hesitate to'. Don't be afraid to tell me if you need any help."

"So, when you use 'afraid to', it is usually followed by a verb. Is that right?"

"Yes! And 'afraid of' is followed by a noun."

"I see. My grandmother is afraid to get into a moving train."

"You generally don't 'get into' a train, you 'get on' a train."

"Get on?"

"That is right. You 'get into' a compartment, but 'get on' a train or a plane."

"I see. But what about a car?"

"You 'get into' or 'get out' of a car. But you 'get on' and 'get off' a plane, train, bike, scooter, etc."

"Is it ok to say, the Prime Minister got off the plane at Delhi."

"Yes, it is. But these days, the word 'deplane' is used very often."

"Deplane! What does it mean?"

"It means to get off the plane. For example, the President deplaned in Delhi."

"So, if you get off the train, can you say 'detrain'?"

"Who knows? May be people will start using it very soon."

"By the way, what is 'squidgy'?"

"It means 'soft and moist, soggy'. Do you know what 'squiffy' means?"

"No".

"It means 'slightly drunk'."

Published in The Hindu on December 19, 1995.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Makers of the Malayalam movie 'Empuraan' have decided to make cuts to the film following backlash over certain scenes. Here is a quiz on controversial Indian movies

Vighnesh P. Venkitesh

QUESTION 1
Name the Hindi movie released in 2016 that decided to move the Bombay High Court against cuts ordered by the Censor Board.

QUESTION 2
This movie directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali had to tweak its title which initially was the name of a Rajput queen. Name the movie.

QUESTION 3
This Malayalam movie by Sanal Kumar Sasidharan had to tweak its title following criticisms that it portrayed a Hindu deity in an explicit fashion. Name the movie.

QUESTION 4
This Hindi movie was initially titled 'Jaffna', but was later changed to avoid direct references. Name the movie.

QUESTION 5
The I&B Ministry had blocked this two-part documentary series, which deals with the same topic of contention as *Empuraan*, from social media platforms. Name the documentary.

Visual question:
Makers of this Irrfan Khan-starrer, a remake of a Malayalam movie, removed one word from its title after salon associations raised objections. Name the movie.

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The occasion for which the Eiffel Tower was built. **Ans: As the centrepiece of the 1889 World's Fair; It was supposed to stand for 20 years**
2. The names of these many scholars are inscribed on the border encircling the first floor of the Tower. **Ans: 72 scholars**
3. The development of this mode of communication came to the rescue of the Eiffel Tower. **Ans: Radio and wireless telegraphy**
4. The significance of 'Le Jules Verne' and 'Madame Brasserie'. **Ans: The two main restaurants on the second floor and first floor respectively**
5. The contributions of Maurice Koechlin and Emile Nouguier. **Ans: They were the engineers behind the actual construction of the tower**
6. The tower surpassed this U.S. structure to become the tallest human-made structure in the world. **Ans: Washington Monument**
7. Many sportspersons got a piece of the iconic tower because of this. **Ans: A piece of the tower was incorporated into the medals at the 2024 Paris Olympics**
Visual: Name the famous scientist seen with Gustav Eiffel. **Ans: Thomas Alva Edison**
Early Birds: Siddhartha Viswanathan| Sadhan K. Panda| Tamal Biswas| Piyali Tuli| Arjun Debnath

Word of the day

Propriety:
correct or appropriate behaviour

Synonyms: correctitude, properness

Usage: *She has always behaved with the utmost propriety.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/proprietypro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /prəˈpraɪəti/

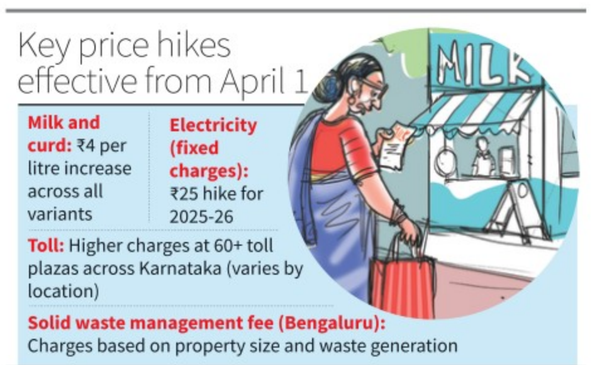
For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Consumers will have to pay more for milk, electricity from today

With multiple cost increases coming into effect simultaneously, the financial burden on the people is expected to rise significantly impacting household budgets across Karnataka

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

As the new financial year begins on Tuesday, consumers across Karnataka will have to shell out more for some basics, as the hikes in milk price, electricity fixed charges, toll, and the introduction of a solid waste management cess in Bengaluru will come into effect.


Key price hikes effective from April 1
Milk and curd: ₹4 per litre increase across all variants
Electricity (fixed charges): ₹25 hike for 2025-26
Toll: Higher charges at 60+ toll plazas across Karnataka (varies by location)
Solid waste management fee (Bengaluru): Charges based on property size and waste generation
MILK

Revised rates

The Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) recently announced an increase in the prices of its Nandini brand of milk and curd. The revised rates reflect a hike of ₹4 per litre across different variants.

As per the updated prices, toned milk (blue packet) will now cost ₹46 per litre (up from ₹42), homogenised toned milk will be priced at ₹47 (₹43 previously), the green packet variant will rise to ₹50 (₹46 earlier), while the premium Shubham (orange packet) will cost ₹52 (₹48 previously). Curd prices have also been revised from ₹50 to ₹54 per litre.

Consumers across the State will also see an increase in electricity bills from Tuesday, with the revised charges reflecting in May's billing cycle.

While the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC) has reduced energy charges by 10 paise per unit, it has increased fixed charges by ₹25 for 2025-26, by ₹5 in 2026-27, and by ₹10 in 2027-28.

Motorists will have to pay higher toll as the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) implements its annual toll revision across Karnataka. Over 60 toll plazas will see an increase in rates, including those on the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway and the toll plaza near Kempegowda International Airport.

While the hike varies across highways, the lowest increase will be ₹5. An NHAI official explained that the toll revisions are not based on a fixed percentage but are instead linked to the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation under the National Highways Fee Rules.

This adjustment is part of a nationwide annual revision, ensuring that toll rates align with inflationary trends, official added.

Residents of Bengaluru will also be required to pay a solid waste management (SWM) user fee, as per a circular issued by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) on March 4.

₹685 crore in revenue

The measure has been included in the civic body's budget, with BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Giri Nath stating that the target is to generate ₹685 crore in revenue from the user fee, which will be collected along with property tax.

The charges will be based on the built-up area of properties, while bulk waste generators which fail to process waste *in situ* will be charged an additional ₹12 per kg. However, those adopting *in-situ* composting will receive a rebate of ₹3 per kg.

Govt. organ transplant and retrieval centre to be established in city

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Department of Medical Education has sanctioned ₹1 crore to modernise existing facilities and set up an organ retrieval centre at Victoria Hospital, to coincide with its 125th anniversary.

The organ retrieval centre is expected to become operational within the next four to six months, according to Sharan Prakash Patil, Minister for Medical Education.

The organ retrieval centre is expected to become operational within the next four to six months, according to Sharan Prakash Patil, Minister for Medical Education.

Functioning as a dedicated unit for collecting organs, the centre will provide comprehensive services, including ICU facilities, an operation theater, a laboratory, and advanced diagnostic capabilities.

"The centre will play a crucial role in streamlining organ procurement for transplants," the Minister stated in a press release on Monday.

"For effective organ donation, identifying potential donors, ensuring safe procedures, conducting family counseling, providing advanced ICU care and adhering to legal frameworks are critical. Adequate funding has been allocated for the centre's holistic development. This initiative is highly meaningful and will benefit economically disadvantaged patients," noted Dr. Patil.

"The establishment of the integrated organ retrieval centre at Victoria Hospital will help scale up the organ donation programme, benefiting underprivileged patients," said Deepak, medical superintendent of Victoria Hospital.

"The centre will have dedicated staff, ICUs, and beds. Once a family consents to organ donation, the patient will be transferred from ICUs to the designated facility," he added. Additionally, to facilitate smooth organ transport, a helipad is being constructed at Victoria Hospital.

Victoria Hospital, already home to a trauma and emergency care centre, the Institute of Gastroenterology and Urology Transplantation, the Regional Institute of Ophthalmology at Minto Hospital and a skin bank, is one of South India's largest medical institutions. The addition of this new organ retrieval centre will further strengthen its capabilities, the release added.

Opposition grows against possible lifting of night traffic ban through Bandipur

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Public opposition to the possible lifting of the night traffic ban on NH 766 through Bandipur is gathering momentum with local farmers questioning the government of the rationale to reconsider the original decision, which has also been upheld by the courts.

Night traffic through Bandipur is banned from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. since 2010 and was introduced to provide a reprieve to the wildlife from disturbance and as a measure to minimise deaths of animals run over by speeding vehicles. But there are speculations that, under pressure, the government may lift the ban, and hence the protests.

Anim

At a meeting held at Moolehole in Bandipur on Sunday, local farmers underlined the imperatives of disturbance-free habitat for wildlife and the imperatives of continuing the ban.

Local farmers underlined the imperatives of disturbance-free habitat for wildlife and the importance of continuing the ban, at a meeting held at Moolehole in Bandipur on Sunday. M.A. SRIRAM

"While the road kills have reduced over the years, it has also helped wildlife to thrive, as evident in the increase in the animal population," said Srikanta, a farmer from Jakkahalli village in the Bandipur buffer zone.

He said that traffic density has gone up in the last 15 years, and the reintroduction of night traffic through Bandipur will increase the grim prospects of a rise in animal deaths due to accidents.

Nagarajuna Kumar of Shivapura village in Gundlupet taluk said the views of the local people have to be considered before taking such decisions and claimed there was an overwhelming support for night traffic ban through the forests.

"When the road is open for 15 hours a day, what is the need for insisting on travelling at night unless one is indulging in illegal activities," he added. There is a consensus among the activists that the politicians were under pressure from the timber lobby, mining lobby, etc., to carry on with their lucrative business unhindered.

Mr. Nagarajuna Kumar said there were nearly 124 villages around Bandipur that were in the Eco Sensitive Zone, and disturbance to wildlife would have a negative impact on the local residents as they would bear the brunt of a consequent increase in human-animal conflicts. Kiran Bagade, a naturalist from Mysuru, pointed out that Bandipur was a critical wildlife and tiger habitat with a high density of animals. Before the ban, scores of animals used to perish in accidents, and these numbers have come down, he added, questioning the need to lift the night traffic ban. Girish of Aranya Outreach, an NGO dedicated to conservation efforts, criticised Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, for advocating the lifting of the ban. He argued that their stance jeopardises the conservation legacy established by their grandmother, Indira Gandhi.

Birth anniversary of General Thimayya celebrated

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

The Kodagu district administration celebrated the 119th birth anniversary of General K.S. Thimayya on Monday and paid tributes.

Vinayak Narwade, Assistant Commissioner of Madikeri, inaugurated the event by offering floral tributes to Gen. Thimayya.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Narwade said that the life and ideals of Gen. Thimayya were an inspiration to all. "While the world has seen many leaders, only a few remain in our hearts forever, and Gen. Thimayya was one of them," he added.

The event was organised in association with the Department of Kannada and Culture, at the General Thimayya Memorial Museum at Sunny Side in Madikeri, which is the birth place of the celebrated general.

Mr. Narwade said that Gen. Thimayya's life serves as an ideal for everyone and pointed out that love for the armed forces and the country was deeply ingrained in him. Noting the strong patriotic sentiment Kodavas have for the country, Mr. Narwade expressed hope that in the future, more young people from Kodagu would join the armed forces.

Ajjinikanda Mahesh Nachayya, president of the Karnataka Kodava Sahitya Academy, emphasised the need to educate students about Gen. Thimayya's struggles and his extraordinary courage.

He urged students to remember the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the country. There was none to match the military achievements and courage of Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa and Gen. Thimayya, he added.

Mr. Nachayya said it was important for the present generation to know how Gen. Thimayya overcame challenges.

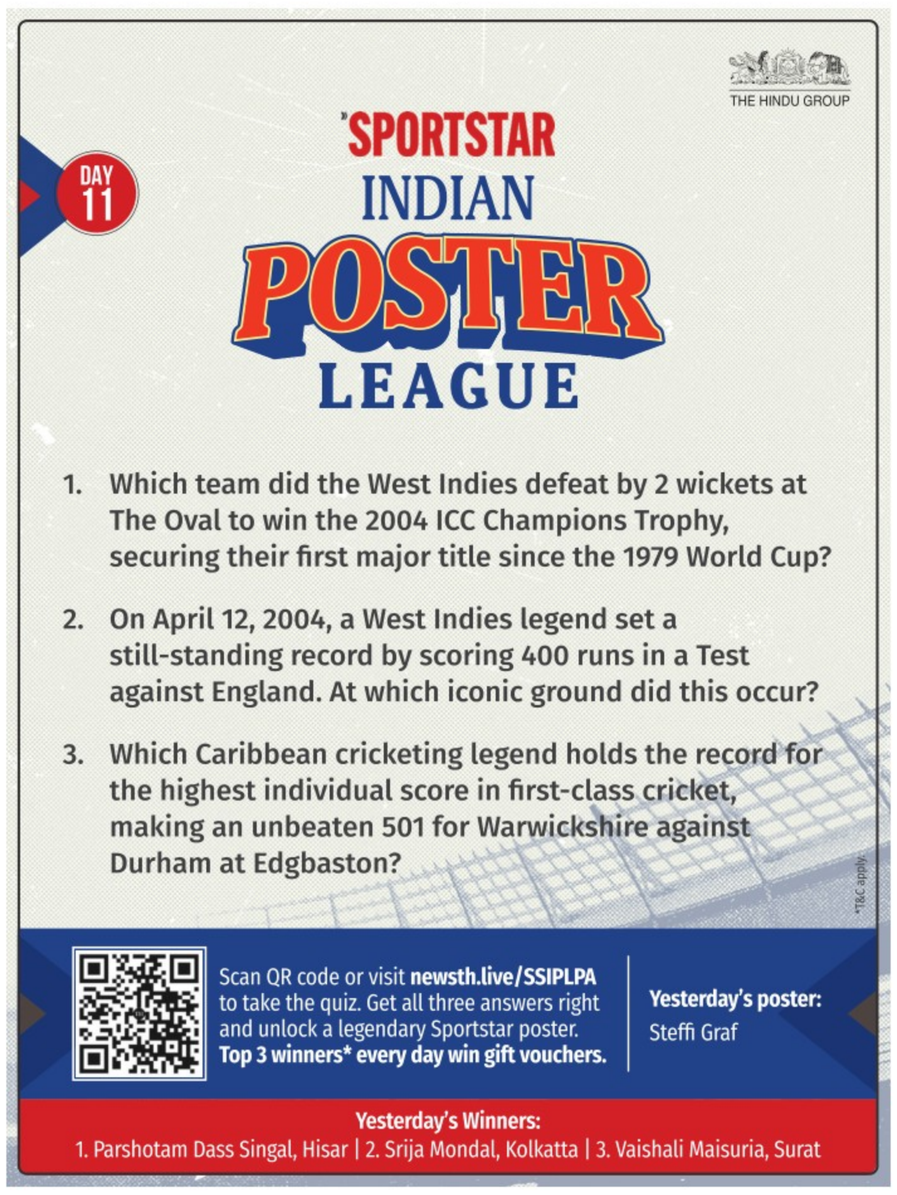
Orangatun's infections worry authorities

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Even as female orangutan Minnie shows encouraging signs of recovery from pneumonia, authorities at the Mysuru zoo remain deeply concerned about her recurring respiratory infections. Despite round-the-clock monitoring by a dedicated team of veterinarians and adherence to protocols, this is the third time Minnie has suffered from pneumonia since she arrived at the zoo.

Zoo Executive Director Rangaswamy expressed concern over the repeated episodes, stating that we are not yet sure why Minnie is more prone to respiratory infections. Out of the four orangutans, only Minnie has experienced this problem, while the others remain healthy.

To enhance Minnie's care and explore solutions, the zoo has been in regular contact with international orangutan experts.


THE HINDU GROUP
SPORTSTAR
DAY 11
INDIAN
POSTER
LEAGUE
1. Which team did the West Indies defeat by 2 wickets at The Oval to win the 2004 ICC Champions Trophy, securing their first major title since the 1979 World Cup?
2. On April 12, 2004, a West Indies legend set a still-standing record by scoring 400 runs in a Test against England. At which iconic ground did this occur?
3. Which Caribbean cricketing legend holds the record for the highest individual score in first-class cricket, making an unbeaten 501 for Warwickshire against Durham at Edgbaston?
*T&C apply.
Scan QR code or visit newsth.live/SSIPLPA to take the quiz. Get all three answers right and unlock a legendary Sportstar poster. Top 3 winners* every day win gift vouchers.
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Yesterday's Winners:
1. Parshotam Dass Singal, Hisar | 2. Srija Mondal, Kolkatta | 3. Vaishali Maisuria, Surat

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Last date for submission of proposals
15th May, 2025 (up to 5:30 pm)

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IMD forecasts widespread rainfall over next few days

Bengaluru city is very likely to experience light to moderate rainfall with thunderstorms from April 2 to 4. FILE PHOTO

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast fairly widespread rainfall over the State on April 3 and 4.

IMD Bengaluru director C.S. Patil said Bengaluru city is very likely to experience light to moderate rainfall with thunderstorms from April 2 to 4. The temperature is likely to decrease by 3°C to 4°C between April 2 and 5.

"The present synoptic condition is that a circulation lies over southwest Bay of Bengal off Tamil Nadu coast extending up to 3.1 km above mean sea level. Another through lies over interior Karnataka extending up to 1.5 km above mean sea level. Under the influence of these systems, Karnataka is very likely to experience isolated light rainfall with thunderstorms on April 1 and 2," Mr. Pail said.

He added that coastal Karnataka, north, and south interior Karnataka are very likely to experience light to moderate scattered rainfall with thunderstorms on April 3 and 4. "There will be isolated heavy rainfall over Uttara Kannada, Udupi, Dakshina Kannada, Shivamogga, Chikkamagaluru, Hassan, Kodagu, Mysuru, Chamarajnagar, Belagavi, Dharwad, Haveri, and Gadag districts on April 3 and 4 for which yellow alert is issued. Hailstorms are likely to occur in isolated places over interior Karnataka on April 3 and 4," he added.

Ex-PCCF urges CM to stop grant of land within swampy grasslands in Nagarahole

B.K. Singh says any such action will lead to serious human-wildlife conflict in Virajpet taluk

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) B.K. Singh has appealed to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to immediately stop the grant of three acres of land each within the swampy grasslands (*Hadlus*) in Nagarahole National Park and Tiger Reserve in Kodagu to claimants.

Mr. Singh, in a letter to Mr. Siddaramaiah who is also the chairperson of the State Board for Wildlife, said the grant of land in *Hadlus* in Nagarahole would lead to serious human-wildlife conflict in Virajpet taluk.

In the letter, Mr. Singh said that he had credible information that a survey was being conducted hastily to grant a uniform three acres of land within the swampy grasslands to all claimants, right in the core area of the national park.

He stated that he had informed the PCCF and Chief Wildlife Warden and alerted on this "completely illegal activity" at the national park.

B.K. Singh says the loss of biodiversity in the region could impact human life considerably as the swampy grasslands are prime habitats of herbivores. FILE PHOTO

"Officers of Revenue and Social Welfare departments are working under pressure and acting against the orders of the Supreme Court. Further, the provisions of the Forest Rights Act, 2006 is being violated and must be stopped forthwith. The Act is to recognise the rights of those who were in occupation as on December 13, 2005; it is not a Land Grant Act," Mr. Singh stated.

"The Forest Rights Act unambiguously states that the claimant shall be in actual occupation of the land as on December 13, 2005. I had personally carried out visits to several *Hadlus* in Nagarahole on January 28, 2011, and had found that none of these were in occupation of any family. Subsequent to my visit, the DCF - Nagarahole in a letter to the Deputy Commissioner of Kodagu, stated that no physical occupation was found during the joint survey by Range Forest Officer, Social Welfare Officer, and Revenue Officer.

"The joint survey also revealed that there is no proof of agriculture being practised in *Hadlus* as claimed. The DCF - Nagarahole, had also observed in the said letter that while recognising the forest rights, sections 4(3) and 4(6) of Chapter - 3 are not being followed. We have protected the *Hadlus* since then and let your administration not damage it," Mr. Singh appealed to the Chief Minister in the letter.

He added that the loss of biodiversity in the region could impact human life considerably as the swampy grasslands were prime habitats of herbivores, including elephants and gaurs.

"With their prime habitat gone, more elephants and gaurs will be forced out of their natural habitat and move into plantations and paddy fields around Nagarahole in Virajpet taluk. Apart from severely affecting plantations and those growing paddy, it will directly put the lives of poor forest dwellers in grave danger since Nagarahole is a high-density habitat for elephants, gaurs and tigers," he added.

Mr. Singh also appealed to the Chief Minister to conduct a high-level review into the issue at the earliest.

Yatnal hints at forming new regional party

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Basanagouda R. Patil Yatnal

Basanagouda R. Patil Yatnal, MLA, who has been expelled by the BJP for six years on the charge of indiscipline, has hinted at forming a new regional party if the dominance of the family of former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa continues in the BJP State unit.

He told reporters in Vijayapura on Sunday that the new party would focus on Hindutva and the comprehensive development of northern Karnataka.

"Mr. Yediyurappa and his son and party State president B.Y. Vijayendra are not only corrupt, but are also engaged in politics of compromise. They have failed to protect Hindutva activists in Karnataka," he alleged.

"Karnataka needs a strong leaders like Yogi Adityanath or Himanta Biswa Sarma, who will run the State on the principles of Hindutva. It also needs an honest Chief Minister. If I become the Chief Minister, I will complete all pending irrigation projects at a far lower cost than the present estimates," he said.

Mr. Yatnal set the deadline of Vijayadashami festival to form his own party. "I will consider severing links with the BJP and forming a new party if the high command does not rid the party of the Yediyurappa family. If the BJP high command in its wisdom, makes the party free of Mr. Yediyurappa and his children, then I will go back to the BJP. Or else, I will chart my own course," he said.

He ruled out going back to the JD(S) or joining the Congress, which he termed 'a pro-Muslim party'.

Survey

"The common man is feeling the need for a new political force in the State that focuses on issues like Hindutva and development of northern Karnataka. We will conduct online and offline surveys. I will tour the State extensively. I will try to visit each taluk and meet Hindutva activists and my supporters. I will take a decision by Vijayadashami," Mr. Yatnal said.

He performed puja in Sri Siddeshwar temple at Vijayapura in the presence of his family members and some followers.

BJP's day-and-night protest against price rise tomorrow

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Opposition BJP is set to hold a day-and-night protest in Bengaluru on April 2 against the alleged imposition of financial burden by the Congress government on the public in the form of hike in prices of milk, power tariff, and of various services.

Announcing this at a press conference here on Monday, BJP State president B.Y. Vijayendra said the protest would be held at Freedom Park in Bengaluru to bring pressure on the government to roll back the hike. All party MLAs, MLCs, former legislators, candidates who lost the Assembly elections, office-bearers, district presidents, and party workers will participate, he said.

BJP State president B.Y. Vijayendra and party leaders at a press conference in Bengaluru on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Mr. Vijayendra said the party leaders will take a call on the day of protest on whether it should be extended. On the same day, the leaders will stage a protest in front of the Kengal Hanumanthaiah statue in Vidhana Soudha against suspension of 18 MLAs from from the Assembly. On April 5, BJP workers will stage a dharna in all district centres, taluks, and Assembly constituencies across the State against price hike, he said.

'Janakrosha Yatra'

The BJP will also embark on a campaign-cum-State tour called 'Janakrosha yatra' (public anguish tour) from Mysuru on April 7 to create public awareness on the impact of hike in prices, Mr. Vijayendra said. Union Minister Pralhad Joshi will inaugurate the yatra while he has discussed the details about the campaign with Union Ministers V. Somanna and Shobha Karandlaje, he said.

The yatra will cover the State in two phases. Each district will have a 2-3 km padayatra, followed by a public gathering addressed by BJP leaders, he explained.

JD(S) not involved?

Interestingly, the BJP has not involved its alliance partner JD(S) in the protests at the time of planning unlike earlier where JD(S) leaders were involved from the time of conceptualisation.

Sources in BJP said that the protests had been planned independently by the BJP. It is learnt that the BJP is trying to galvanise its cadre ahead of the elections to local bodies.

Meanwhile, Mr. Vijayendra criticised the State Budget, claiming that it favoured minorities.

HAL registers revenue of ₹30,400 cr. during FY 2024-25

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) recorded a revenue of ₹30,400 crore (provisional and unaudited) for FY ending March 31, 2025, as against the revenue of ₹30,381 crore during the previous year.

"This achievement was despite shortfall in deliveries of Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) and Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH). The deliveries of LCA were affected owing to the non-availability of engines. The ALH delivery schedule was hit owing to an accident in January and subsequent grounding of the fleet. However, the deliveries of other products and services were accelerated, which helped us to maintain the top line," said D.K. Sunil, CMD, HAL. "With the company's order book significantly improving in the last 12 months, the company used the year to add capacities as additional lines for LCA and HTT-40 were put-up besides augmenting the aero engine capacity at Koraput," HAL said.

The order book stood at ₹1,84,000 crore as against the opening order book position of ₹94,129 crore and after adjusting current year liquidation.

During 2024-25, HAL received manufacturing contracts of ₹1,02,000 crore and ROH contracts of ₹17,500 crore. Recently, the company signed a contract with MoD for supply of 156 LCH Prachand worth ₹62,777 crore. This is the single biggest procurement by MoD from HAL till date. The other highlights: HAL became the first Defence PSU to achieve 'Maharatna' status, contracts signed for supply of 12 Su-30 MKI aircraft, Mid Life Upgrade of 40 Do-228 aircraft, supply of 240 AL31FP engines of Su-30 MKI aircraft, and avionics upgrade of one IL-78 aircraft.

HC declares as void sale of a commercial space in UB City

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has declared as void the sale of a commercial space in UB City in Bengaluru by United Breweries (Holdings) Ltd. in May 2012 when the company was facing liquidation proceedings before the court.

The court also declared that the property, situated as level-III of the CANBERRA Block of UB City, along with open space was sold for undervalued price to Bengaluru-based M/s Brunton Developers, in which father of the then MD of UB Global, a division of UBHL's division, was a partner.

While directing the jurisdictional sub-registrar to cancel the sale deed registered on May 21, 2012, the court directed the Official Liquidator to take possession of the property bearing number 202 (new number 222), and auction it after securing permission from the court.

Petition dismissed

Justice Suraj Govindaraj passed the order while dismissing the petition filed by Brunton Developers, a real estate firm.

It directs the jurisdictional sub-registrar to cancel the sale deed registered on May 21, 2012

Brunton Developers had filed the petition after the Official Liquidator in 2023 had refused to grant no objection certificate for transferring the Khata of the property in favour of the petitioner. The Official Liquidator had declined it for the reason that property was sold after initiating the process for liquidation of UBHL in March 2012.

During the hearing of the petition, the court questioned the sale value (₹3 crore) for which the property was sold and had asked the petitioner to produce sale deeds for which other properties in CANBERRA block of UB City was sold prior to this sale deed.

As Brunton did not produce copies of sale deeds of other properties, the Official Liquidator produced while indicating that sale of this property was undervalued at around ₹7,829.2 per sq. ft. as against sale of other properties in the range of ₹12,000 per sq. ft. to ₹14,520 per sq. ft., which includes a property sold to M/s Prestige Cuisine, sister concern of the petitioner company, at around ₹14,519 crore per sq. ft.

On appointment of a court commissioner to inspect the property, it was also found that Brunton had in possession of additional space though it was not part of the sale deed.

Rejecting the excuses given by the petitioner, including an offer to pay an additional ₹1.54 crore, the court observed that "it is only after all the mistakes and the suppressions were pointed out by the Official Liquidator that Brunton has come forward to make additional payment".

Water from Bhadra reservoir to be released between April 1 and 5

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

On Ugadi, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced the release of 2 tmcft of water from Bhadra reservoir between April 1 and 5 to allow water flow in Tungabhadra canals.

He said, in a release, on Sunday, "As a Ugadi gift to our hardworking farmers and the people of Kalyana Karnataka, we have decided to release 2 tmcft of water from Bhadra reservoir to allow water flow in Tungabhadra canals. This will help protect standing crops in Koppal, Raichur, and Yadgir while ensuring adequate drinking water for these districts."

As on Sunday, Bhadra had 28 tmcft of live storage, with 11 tmcft needed for irrigation till May 8, and 14 tmcft for drinking water, he said.

CM for Delhi tomorrow

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will visit Delhi on Wednesday to participate in the inauguration of the renovated building of the Karnataka Bhavana.

He is also scheduled to meet a few Union Ministers. As his visit comes close on the heels of the row over alleged honey-trapping episode, it remains to be seen if he meets any central leaders to hold consultations on the issue.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

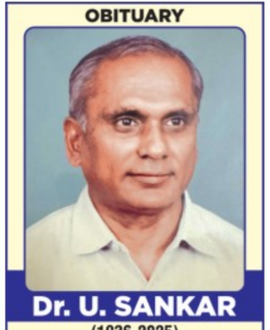
SAD DEMISE

Sri D. CHENGALVARAYAN
B.E., M.Sc., (Engg.)
04-07-1939 - 30-03-2025
Alumnus of CIT (1961) & CEG (1962)
Former Chief Engineer, PWD, Tamilnadu
A life lived well, with malice toward none and charity to all.
The void you leave in our hearts will never be filled.
Grieving Wife (Smt. D. Swarnamala), daughters, and son.
Also mourned by: Sons-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandchildren, granddaughters-in-law, great-grandchild, and a host of relatives and friends

DEATH

In deep sorrow, we share the news of the demise of our beloved mother
Mrs. JAYA VISWANATHAN
of Serene Urbana, Bangalore, on 23.03.2025. She was 92 years old. May her soul rest in peace.
Indira Viswanathan Peterson, Rama Viswanathan, Jagannathan Viswanathan, and Bhavani Rangan.
Rama Viswanathan: 8754356532

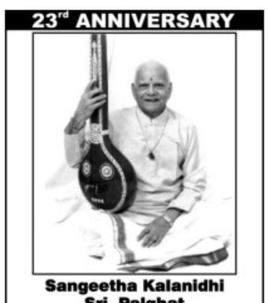
OBITUARY



Dr. U. SANKAR
(1936-2025)
Attained Sivaloka Pathavi on 30th March (Sunday) at Chennai. The cremation is scheduled on 1st April (Tuesday) at 10:30 am at the Besant Nagar Crematorium.
Recognized as an expert in many fields including Teaching, Research, Chairmanship of prestigious bodies & Advisory Roles
He made notable contributions at the University Of Wisconsin, University of Madras, Madras Institute of Development Studies, Madras School of Economics and several other institutions of repute.
Deeply Mourned by
Thilaha, Ganesh & Devi
Ph: 9380160830

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

23rd ANNIVERSARY



Sangeetha Kalanidhi
Sri. Palghat
Prof. K.V. Narayanaswamy
16.11.1923 ✲ 01.04.2002
Wife: Mrs. Padma Narayanaswamy

Ninth Death Anniversary

Air Cmde. N.A.K. SARMA
You are forever in our hearts and minds
And your love guides us everyday
- Naks family

IN MEMORY OF YOUR LOVED ONES
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DONATE EYES - GIFT SIGHT

A book that delves into the experiences of the people who live along the Vrishabhavathi

The Vrishabhavathi is named after the Sanskrit word 'Vrishabha' (bull), possibly a nod to its fabled origins: at the feet of the Nandi statue at the Big Bull Temple in Basavanagudi

Preeti Zachariah
BENGALURU

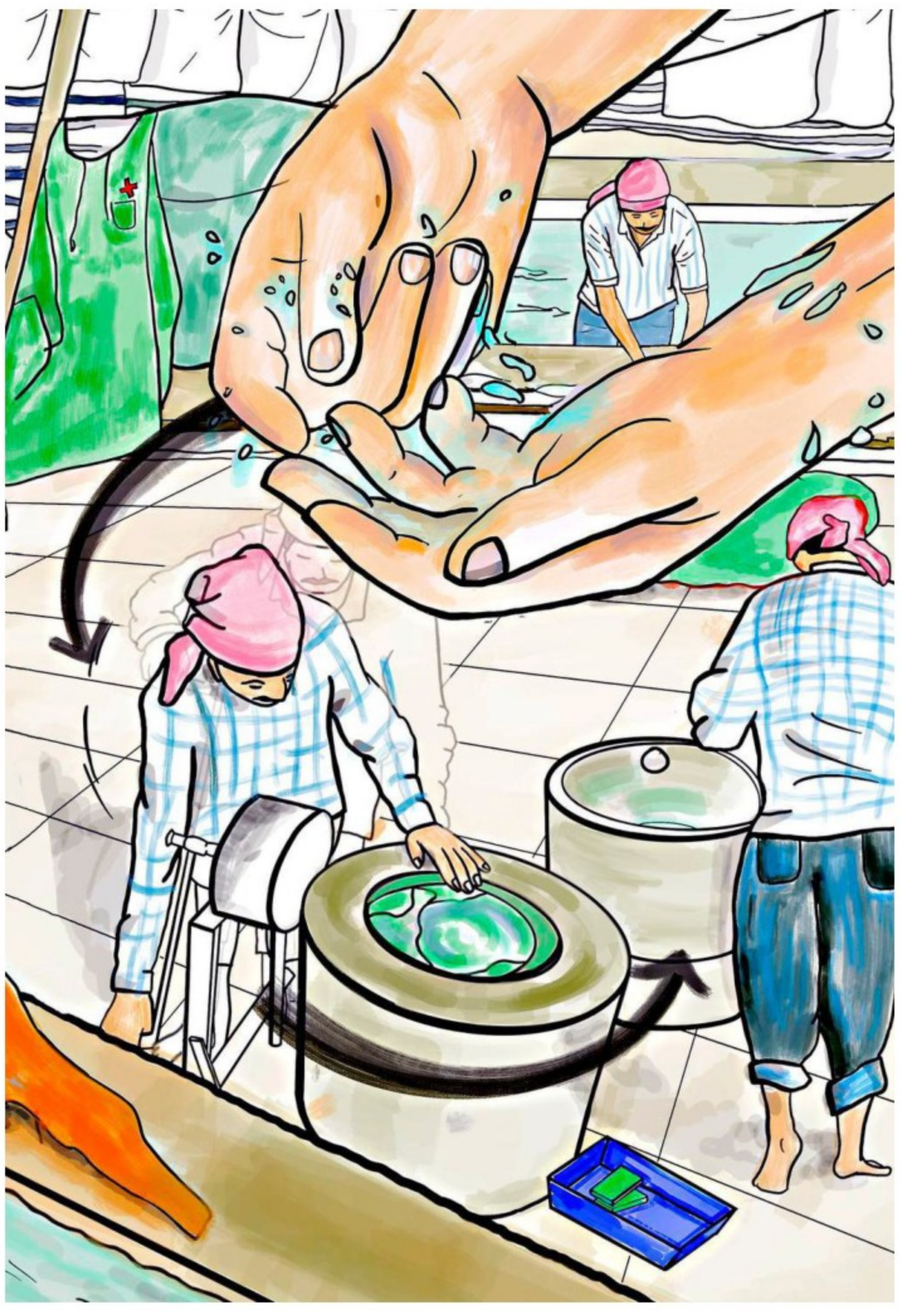
For most Bengalurians, Vrishabhavathi, a tributary of the Arkavathi, is a stream (sometimes just a trickle) of untreated, filthy water. But in 2020, during the first COVID-19 wave, Kadambari Komandur stumbled across a newspaper article with a picture of the river looking much cleaner than usual. She shared it with some of her friends on a WhatsApp group, one of whom was Namrata Narendra, an urban researcher, architect and illustrator, from Bengaluru, now doing her PhD in the Netherlands on periurban water provisioning in North East India.

"Kadambari lives in Malleshwaram, and I live in Nayandahalli (when she was in Bengaluru), so we have both been around the river," says Namrata. Additionally, since they both studied at the RV College of Architecture, they often saw the Vrishabhavathi en route to their college. "It is present in that area very visibly," she says. "So, we wanted to do something about it."

Kadambari says they started with the somewhat ambitious idea of creating a digital repository for those interested in the river to communicate with each other. "We saw that a lot of nature-based solutions and urban systems are a bit disconnected," says the Bengaluru-based information designer, who has recently co-authored a graphic narrative centred on the Vrishabhavathi, titled *Whose river is it anyway?*, along with Namrata and Megha Kashyap. "Multiple stakeholders engage with the river at different parts of its journey but do not speak to each other. Also, some stakeholders use the river disproportionately, and some are impacted disproportionately; we wanted to highlight that everybody doesn't have equal access or is equally affected."

In keeping with this idea, Kadambari and Namrata (Megha, a designer from Bengaluru, interested in the connections between people, nature, and cities, joined them later in 2023) began contacting several experts, including Shubha Ramachandran of the Biome Environmental Trust, Nirmala Gowda and Madhuri Mandava of Paani Earth, and ecologist Harini Nagendra from Azim Premji University. "Over these conversations, we understood the scale of what we were trying to do," explains Kadambari. "They guided us away from moving in that direction to something more focused and allowed us to use our skill sets: illustration, research and documentation."

Although there was already a lot of published work about the Vrishabhavathi, it is often very technical, says Kadambari. "It was very inaccessible, hard for us to read, and we wondered how people could access it," she adds."So, we thought that maybe graphic storytelling and communication were things we could do." Their initiative also led to an interesting collaboration with Nirmala and Madhuri, who were already doing a lot of work in the Arkavathi/Vrishabhavathi basin. "Theirs was a much more technical approach, looking at rivers from the perspectives of Geographic Information System (GIS) implementation," says Kadambari. However, as the Paani Earth team was researching, uncovering different stories and meeting new people, they also realised that many more things were happening on the ground that needed to go beyond just technicalities, she believes. Kadambari and Namrata realised it would be beneficial to partner with the Paani Earth researchers, who would provide starting points (from their field work) that they could delve into for their storytelling, recalls Kadambari.



Graphic illustrations from the book *Whose river is it anyway?* SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

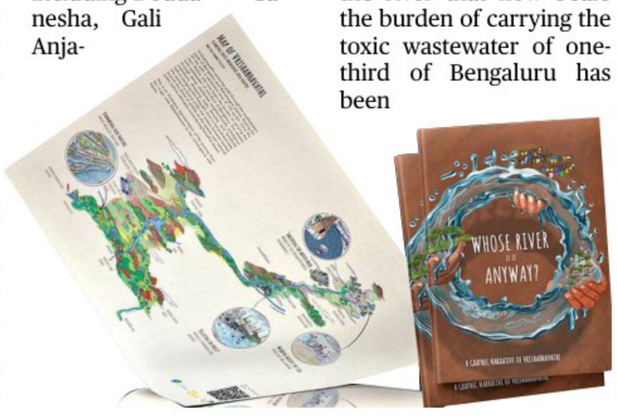
A river, after all, is more than simply a water body; it also shapes nostalgia, mythologies, culture, and spiritual beliefs.

"We recognised the need to move beyond traditional academic frameworks," says Kadambari. Research alone doesn't always inspire change, especially when it comes to complex systems. For issues as deeply emotional and personal as a river, engaging with those emotions can be a powerful catalyst."

The story of a river

The Vrishabhavathi is named after the Sanskrit word 'Vrishabha' (bull), possibly a nod to its fabled origins: at the feet of the Nandi statue at the Big Bull Temple in Basavanagudi. According to *Whose river is it anyway?*, the Vrishabhavathi, which weaves through dense residential neighbourhoods, prestigious institutions, shopping malls, temples, and farmlands before merging with the Arkavathi river, was once known for its pristine waters. "She played a central role in human settlement and religious life, leading to the establishment of several temples along her banks, including Dodda Ganesha, Gali Anjaneya, and Gavi Gangadhareshwara," the authors write.

Today, the 69-km-long river, which passes through the southwestern parts of Bengaluru and Ramanagara district, is labelled 'critically polluted' by the pollution control board, and "has been stripped of recognition as a living system," the authors tell us, pointing out that the river that now bears the burden of carrying the toxic wastewater of one-third of Bengaluru has been overwritten by waste and neglect and diminished by the promise of piped water from the Kaveri. Despite these bleak circumstances, however, "she remains a source of life" continuing to "quench the thirst of wildlife as she passes near national parks" and bear "witness to the struggles of those who depend on her– farmers downstream, whose lands are poisoned by her waters; potters and dhobis, whose livelihoods have been pushed to the margins as she loses her vitality; and the biodiversity that still clings to her banks, struggling against the degradation forced upon her," argues the book.



The voice of the river

Whose river is it anyway? delves into the collective memories, lived experiences and imaginations of the people who live and work along the Vrishabhavathi, allowing the river's voice to be heard through the stories of those who have lived with her, who have thrived and struggled alongside her.

"(It) does not attempt to chart her history, measure her pollution, or assign blame," the book asserts. "Instead, it is a collection of memories, stories, and imaginations–an acknowledgment of her presence, her past, and the possibilities of what she could become. "

The book, supported by the Bengaluru Sustainability Forum's Small Grants Programme, highlights four major themes: livelihood, pollution, urban flooding and biodiversity. As part of the research, the authors began visiting certain specific locations, including the Dhobi Ghat at Malleshwaram, the market at the Gali Anjaneya Swamy Temple in Nayandahalli, the Harohalli, Byramangala and Anedoddi industrial areas and the Kaveri Wildlife Sanctuary where the Vrishabhavathi joins the Arkavathi before melding into the Kaveri. "We went and spent some time at these places to see what the situation is, what people say, what their memories are, and what it is like currently," says Kadambari.

Curious to understand what the river may have once looked like, they tried to trace it, visiting the kalyani at Nandi Teertha opposite the Kadu Malleshwara temple, even asking people to send archival media of the river, recalls Namrata. "It was a real surprise that there weren't very many photos of what the river used to look like." What they did get, however, were stories of people saying that "my mother used to wash clothes, we used to bathe there, my father would be in the temple and could see this expanse of river. "Someone even said that you could drink from the river if you used a small filter," she says.

Another interesting outcome of their research was how the perception of the river has changed over time, explains Megha, whose work focused primarily on the market at the Gali Anjaneya Swamy Temple in Nayandahalli." The river used to flood annually and go into the temple, which was considered to be a sacred phenomenon," she says.

"But now they don't want it to flood because of all the garbage that water brings."

Beyond the stories, memories and challenges faced by the many human beings who live and work along the river, *Whose River is it anyway?* also explores how the survival of several non-human species in the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary depends on the health of water bodies like the Vrishabhavathi, Arkavathi and Cauvery. "Since people have a voice, they will speak up for themselves. But wildlife has no voice at all," says Kadambari.

Take, for instance, the case of the endangered humpback mahseer, the "Tiger of the Cauvery", which is endemic to the river's basin.

"Because of the pollution, the change in the flow pattern, and the proposed Mekedatu dam, there is a possibility that the fish could go completely extinct," she says. "Then the question becomes whether human need, and something completely preventable, be allowed to cause extinction of a whole species."

To know more about the project, email vrishabhavatistoryproject@gmail.com.

'Hoy' is fine, but what about common human situations?

A word, usually untranslateable, is taken from another language – jugaad, chaai, or chuddies, for example – and co-opted into the King's English

ABOUT 500 WORDS

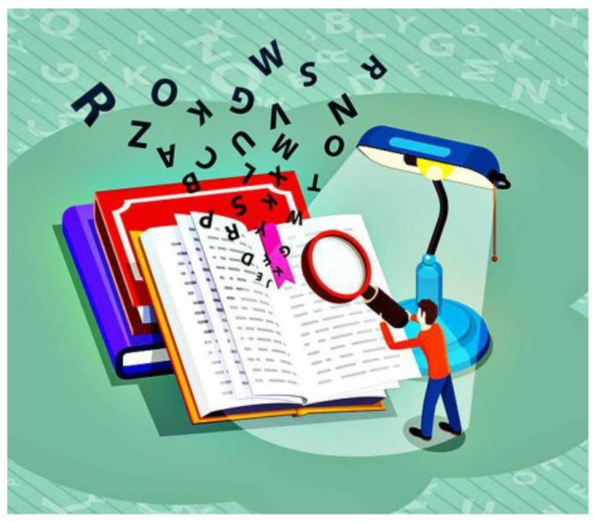
Suresh Menon

At a dinner once, I sat next to a person who turned to me with, "Can I have some more juice please?" when he meant gravy. Ignoring for the moment the kind of circles I move in, let's focus on the more serious issue here. There is no word in the English language that describes such a person. Nor is there one for the way people stand when examining other people's bookshelves.

Or for the gesture when you see someone you think you know and raise your hand in greeting only to realise he is a stranger and so finish by brushing your hair instead.

There are two ways of creating new words (the dictionary does not recognise the obvious word for this: vocabulate, dismissing it as slang). The first is promoted by OED (not Obsessive Educational Disorder, which many of us have, but Oxford English Dictionary). A word, usually untranslateable, is taken from another language - jugaad, chaai, or chuddies, for example - and co-opted into the King's English. This year, the OED has borrowed from Malaysia, Norway, Japan, the Philippines. From the last-named comes 'gigil' (you can look it up).

There is a second, more interesting way. Take an everyday situation or emotion that has no word to describe it, and then create one.



This year, the OED has borrowed from Malaysia, Norway, Japan, and the Philippines. GETTY IMAGES

But this method, made popular by Douglas Adams and John Lloyd, has not caught on. These two writers were on a holiday in Corfu while Adams was working on *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy*.

They noticed there were "spare words which spend their time doing nothing but loafing about on signposts pointing at places." Douglas explained their mission: "to get these words down off the signposts and into the mouths of babes and sucklings and so on, where they can start earning their keep in everyday conversation and make a more positive contribution to society." They wrote a book about it: *A Meaning of Liff: A Dictionary of Things That There Aren't Any Words For Yet*. Later they wrote *A Deeper Meaning of Liff*.

The OED, let's face it, doesn't acknowledge or even recognise huge chunks of human experience. For example, what is the word for "That part of a raincoat which trails out of a car after you've closed the door on it." Use *Fladderbister*, a word otherwise wasting its time loafing about on a signpost in Scotland, say the writers. And what about the bruise on the shoulder of someone who has been knighted unnecessarily often?

Adams and Lloyd recognise human situations. Sometimes these are psychologically positive. Like the word for "standing in the kitchen wondering what you went in there for." OK, you tell yourself, I am not the only one who feels foolish in such cases.

Then there's a word for "cautious movements towards the bathroom in the strange house in the dark."

It's all very well for the OED to borrow "Yoh!" from South Africa and run with it, but what's the word for "words that sound like they have a meaning, but don't?"

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 1, 1975

Increase in incidence of Malaria

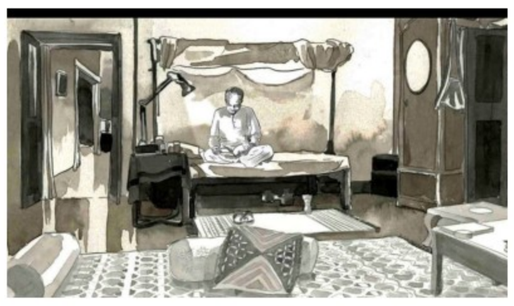
Bangalore, March 31: Malaria in the State was on the increase from 1961, and a special study was being made by Mr. H. Siddaveerappa, Health Minister, informed the Karnataka Assembly to-day. Replying to two questions on the eradication of malaria tabled by Mr. M. M. Sajjanan and Mr. Rajapid Naik, (Congress) the Minister said he would be taking up the matter at the next conference of Health Ministers as a special subject for discussion.

He explained that in some areas of the State where there was no malaria, there were positive cases now. Some of them bad become endemic. Though a special officer of the rank of Joint Director had been appointed, there were no results so far. Among the causes for the increased incidence of malaria were the prevalence of insanitary conditions and failure of local bodies to take proper care in the maintenance of. drains. This was so even in Bangalore. Mosquitoes had become resistant to D.D.T. Other types of insecticides were being thought of. The Minister said due to the increased Incidence of malaria in several parts of the State, the stock position of anti-malaria drug was found to be inadequate.

CITYBEATS

Touch of jazz

APRIL 4, 5
Andorra, a critically acclaimed Danish-indie jazz ensemble, will perform in the city. Known for blending vintage jazz with atmospheric textures, its members include Mads la Cour on the flugelhorn, guitarist Simon Krebs, Peter Kohlmetz Møller on the keyboard, bassist Morten Jorgensen and drummer Nikolaj Bundvig.
At Windmills. Tickets on windmill-india.com.



A flower's tale

APRIL 2
Experience Kumar Gandharva's music in the film, *Phool Ka Chhand (Rhythm Of a Flower)*, presented by Vikalp Bengaluru. The 81-minute film in Hindi and Marathi with English subtitles, is directed by Amit Dutta, with Kuldeep Barve as co-writer and Allen Shaw as animator.
Visit bic@bangaloreinternationalcentre.org for details.

Classical quest

APRIL 6
Hindustani musician Nishant Panicker will perform at the Pandit Gourang Kodical memorial concert. Nishant took his initial vocal lessons from sarod maestro Padma Shri Rajeev Taranath, and is one of the youngest musicians in India to receive the acclaimed National Center for Performing Arts Hindustani Vocal Scholarship.
At Canara Union, 6pm. Entry is free.

Song speak

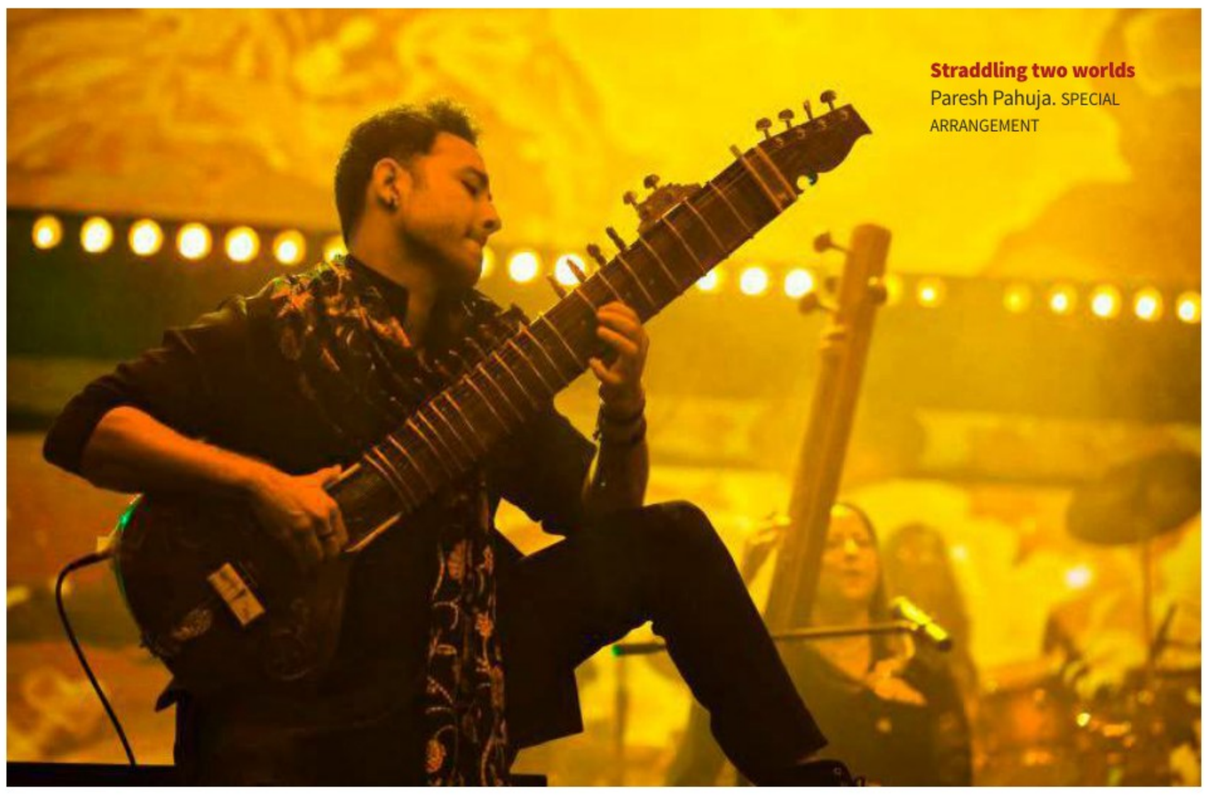
Paresh Pahuja holds forth on Voice Notes Concert India Tour, *Bandish Bandits* and his foray into Telugu cinema

S B Vijaya Mary

Paresh Pahuja's musical journey began at three – not with an instrument, but with a train. While recounting his first train ride to his grandmother, he did not just tell the story; he performed it, turning the clatter of wheels and rhythm of tracks into his first composition. Even before learning words, he expressed experiences through sounds. From drumming on buckets to trailing wedding bands, music was always a part of him, though formal training remained elusive. His love for cassettes – where songs intertwined with dialogues – inspired the format of his Voice Notes Concert India Tour.

The tour will take audiences through 12 original songs and six voice notes, featuring hits such as 'Dooron Dooron', 'Botalaan', and 'Mascara', across Chandigarh, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Mumbai.

Speaking over the phone, Paresh explains the tour's concept. "It is a concert with a story. Storytelling plays a major role in it. I have always been deeply connected to voice notes. My day begins with a voice note from my mother, greeting me, followed by exchanges with friends and work-related messages – all through voice notes. Even my music starts this way. I record a melody and send it to my lyricist friends – Shiv, Vayu, Siddhant – who then respond with words through voice notes, shaping the songs."



Straddling two worlds Paresh Pahuja. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

At its core, the Voice Notes Concert is a story of two people balancing life and their careers in Mumbai, told through six voice notes and 12 songs. "That's the heart of the concert. This is why I call it Voice Notes; for me, they are more than just messages; they are the foundation of my music and connection to the world."

The Voice Notes Concert India Tour by Paresh Pahuja and Friends
April 6: Sangit Kala Mandir, Kolkata
April 12: Prestige Centre for Performing Arts, Bengaluru
April 27: Mumbai
Tickets: Bookmyshow.com

A living room on stage

Instead of a traditional concert setup, the stage for the concert is designed like Paresh's living room, recreating the warmth and intimacy of his early jamming sessions with friends. "We wanted to make the audience feel like they are in my home, experiencing my love story. That is why it is called Paresh Pahuja and Friends – because everyone, from the crew to the audience, is made to feel like a friend. There is always chai, water, and a warm, inviting atmosphere. The show is not just a concert or a play, it is an unclassifiable experience, blending elements of theatre, music, and storytelling," says Paresh.

The concept for the Voice Notes Concert was born spontaneously, much like the creative journey of the show. "It started with me calling my musician friends from *Bandish Bandits* and Raga n Rage over for a casual jam session. I had no idea what we were going to perform, but I knew we had to do it."

With rehearsals in full swing, Paresh realised that something was missing – a narrative thread to tie the songs together. That is when the idea of incorporating recorded voice notes into the show emerged. "I reached out to my friend, actress Anupriya Goenka, who recorded the voice notes. The whole process unfolded organically."

Many of the songs featured in the concert have been in Paresh's personal vault for over five to six years as he never found the right platform to showcase them. "Producers often told me that my songs wouldn't work – either the intros were too long or the poetry broke the conventional structure. But every time someone told me this, I took it as a challenge. Now, those same songs are trending on Spotify and other platforms."

Bandish Bandits to center stage

Paresh became a familiar face as Mahi in the web series *Bandish Bandits Season 2*, but few knew about his musical side until 'Dooron Dooron' went viral.

"People knew me as an actor and assumed music was just a hobby. But when 'Dooron...' took off around the same time as *Bandish Bandits*, they started making the connection. That is when the demand for live shows grew."

In *Bandish Bandits*, Paresh had to play the sitar – an instrument he had never held before. "During the audition, they asked if I could play a string instrument. I confidently said yes, thinking of the guitar. But when I landed the role, I realised I had to play the sitar! I was petrified, but learning it turned out to be one of the most enriching experiences of my life."

Paresh credits the writing and direction of *Bandish Bandits* for shaping Mahi, his rebellious rockstar sitarist character. More than just attitude, Mahi's core angst was key – his defiance against tradition and belief that education in music should not be a privilege. Paresh wanted this message to come through authentically, not as a performance. He praises director Anand Tiwari for the creative freedom that allowed Mahi's body language and persona to evolve organically.

Paresh's first experience with Telugu cinema came with *Operation Valentine* (2024), giving him a taste of the industry's grand storytelling.

"I would jump at the chance to collaborate, especially with filmmakers like Rajamouli sir or even the new wave of storytellers in Telugu cinema. India is rich with incredible stories across cultures, and I would love to explore them all in any language. I am especially drawn to romance, intense love stories, and action-packed narratives. It would be an exciting challenge!"

Refreshed by the bitter-sweet

Ranjani Govind

There is far more to Ugadi or Yugadi as it is also called, than the customary offerings of sweet, sour, salt, pungent, and bitter flavours, to ring in the season. The meaning behind the culture and cuisine of Ugadi traces its origins to centuries-old sacred works, says Arathi VB, a vocalist, who holds an MA in Carnatic classical music and a PhD in Sanskrit.

"Nature is never seen as just a resource in India, but rather a manifestation of the Divine. Therefore, we celebrate every cyclic transition or change in nature as a divine blessing and observe seasonal festivals such as Ugadi, Sharan-navaratra, Deepavali, Sankranti, Ratha Saptami and Holi, as well as the *purnimas* and *amavasyas*. They rejuvenate our spirits, strengthen our social bonds and remind us of the blessings that come through Nature," says Arathi.

Arathi, born and brought up in Bengaluru, was exposed to these areas from a tender age. "My parents were active participants and volunteers in organising *satsangs* bhajans, discourses, cultural and literary activities and services to the needy. I grew up in an atmosphere of learning, yearning to discover the original *kavya-shastras* for a direct comprehension of our *desha* and *dharma*. Sanksrit became the tool for that," she says.

Arathi, who pursued her learning of *shastras, kavyas, agamas* and *Vedanta* from scholars such as N Ranganatha Sharma, R Ganesh, Vijayalakshmi, KS Kannan, Tyagali R Sharma, and others, says, "I initially learnt classical music from my mother and later on, from Pankaja Ramachandra and TS Satyavathi. Historical figures such as Chanakya, Vidyaranya, Vivekananda and Shivaji, apart from kings, queens, scholars, yogis and philanthropists have inspired me to work for the cause of *desha* and *dharma*."

Arathi spoke on the relevance of Ugadi. Excerpts:

One sees Ugadi in connection to spring, a season which holds significance for many celebrations. Why?
Most Indian festivals are *rututsavs* (seasonal festivals). The foremost of them is Ugadi, the pan-Indian New Year. For Indians, the conclusion of the old year as well as the beginning of the new year, must both coincide with spring celebrations.

Hence, we celebrate two Ugadis – one is the *souramana-yugadi,* based on the solar calendar that follows the cycle of the 27 *nakshastras*. The second is the *Chandramana-yugadi* based on the lunar calendar and follows the cycle of the bright and dark fortnights created by the waxing and waning of the moon. The two calendars supplement each other to ascertain time and astronomical predictions.

Like most festivals, Ugadi too, has two dimensions – the *vrata* (vows) and *utsava* (celebrations). While *vrata* is for self-introspection, puja, charity and service to others. *Utsava* is about social bonding – greeting, exchanging gifts, feasting, music, dance, processions, games etc.

There are regional variations to Ugadi celebrations, though it is quite common to see the rising sun and seek blessings from Surya and Bhumi, followed by *puja* and the feeding of cattle. People conclude their *vrata* by consuming *prasada*.

In southern Karnataka, a mixture of *bevu-bella* (neem and jaggery) is consumed. People prepare a variety of dishes as per regional customs and enjoy a *Sahabhojana* or feast with friends and family. Sesame and jaggery are the key ingredients in eatables or beverages, and a variety of dishes prepared with raw and ripe mangoes are quite common, all over the country.

Of Nature's bounty Neem leaves, raw mangoes, flowers, and fruits, being sold on the eve of Ugadi, Arathi VB (below). MURALI KUMAR K / SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The evenings are marked with song, dance, drama, *harikatha*, processions, native games and sports, and acts of charity. *Panchanga-shravana* or listening to the almanac being read aloud in the evening is one of the highlights of Ugadi.

In Karnataka, the day after Ugadi is celebrated as *hosa-tadaku*, where non-vegetarian dishes are consumed by those who wish to. In pre-colonial times, under royal patronage, Ugadi celebrations lasted for 15 days culminating with *Chitra-Purnima*.

How did Ugadi, the core of Vasanthotsava, become a platform for the arts?
Vasanthotsava was the grandest public celebration in India for ages, going on for three months at a stretch, till British rule put an end to it. Descriptions of Vasantotsava are seen in the *Ramayana, Mahabharata* and other classical literary works. The living traditions of folk and tribal traditions, all allude to *Vasanthotsava* in some way or the other.

Despite restrictions and the discontinuation of royal patronage, *Vasanthotsava* celebrations continued with the support of common people.

Ugadi, a part of the*Vasanthotsava* has long been a platform for fine arts. Many texts, sculptures and living traditions explicitly document this. The beautiful *Vasanta-mantapa* galleries in ancient temples and *okali-hondas* (huge stone tubs used for mass colour spraying) and sculptural depictions speak a lot about the great scale of celebrations.

Every year, poets and artists presented their latest compositions during this season, and were duly honoured and rewarded by rulers, as well as the public. Texts such as the *Kamasutram, Lalitavistara, Ratnavali* and others, describe the crowds of men and women of all communities participating with joy.

What is the spiritual, social, cultural and Ayurvedic significance of consuming *bevu-bella-maavu* on Ugadi?
Bevu-bella comprises a mixture of jaggery and neem leaves, sometimes served with grated slivers of *maavu* (raw mango). The sweetness of jaggery and bitterness of neem leaves represent the joys and sorrows of life. The experiences of pleasure and sadness progressively make us tougher and wiser in our journey.

Consuming a mixture of *bevu-bella* symbolises one's mental preparation to face life with optimism. For both worldly success and spiritual elevation, we need a balanced mind that can keep calm, strong and cheerful amidst turbulences that come our way.

Even after 'voluntary cuts', right-wing still sore over *Empuraan*

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Show of support: Minister Saji Cherian watching *Empuraan* at a cinema hall on Monday.

Despite making "voluntary cuts" to *L2: Empuraan*, the makers of the film continue to face verbal attacks from right-wing organisations and leaders.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) State vice-president B. Gopalakrishnan stirred up a controversy after he called film producer Supriya Menon, filmmaker Prithviraj Sukumaran's spouse, an "urban naxal."

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's mouthpiece *Organiser* published yet another article against the film, this time specifically targeting Mr. Sukumaran, calling him the "voice of the anti-nationals."

Meanwhile, Communist Party of India (Marxist) State secretary M.V. Govindan, Minister for Cultural Affairs Saji Cherian and Congress general secretary K.C. Venugopal watched the uncut version of the film on Monday. The hastily re-edited version, with less than 3 minutes of content removed, is expected to be uploaded in all cinemas by Tuesday.

Mr. Cherian lauded Mr. Sukumaran's courage in making the film and said the makers should also show the courage to screen the entire film without re-editing.

'Wayanad landslides wiped out 2 forest encroachments'

Destroyed area includes a 0.43 hectare encroachment in Punchirimattam vested forest area and another one of around 0.12 hectare downstream, Kerala Forest Department informs NGT

G. Krishnakumar
KOCHI

Disaster dent: A view of the origin of the 2024 landslides at Punchirimattam on Vellarimala hills in Wayanad. THULASI KAKKAT

The Kerala Forest department has informed the National Green Tribunal that the massive Wayanad landslides on July 30, 2024, completely destroyed two encroachments spanning 0.55 ha (hectare) in Punchirimattam forest area.

It included an encroachment of 0.43 hectare in the Punchirimattam vested forest area and another one of around 0.12 hectare downstream, according to a report filed by the department before the Southern Bench of the tribunal on Thursday.

The Bench, which had taken *suo motu* cognisance of the disaster based on a report in *The Hindu*, had impleaded the Forest department as the ninth respondent and directed the authorities to submit an independent action-taken report on encroachments and afforestation.

As per the report, the government had taken a considered position to stop further encroachments into the forests by regularising those occupations prior to January 1, 1977, and to evict encroachments post January 1, 1977.

Out of the initially identified encroachments extending over 11,920 hectares, evictions have been effected on 6,945 hectare and the present extent under encroachments is 4,975.5 hectare. Of this, the number of encroachments specific to Wayanad is 2,778, over an area of 936.2 hectare. These encroachments are pending eviction in view of the various stages of court cases.

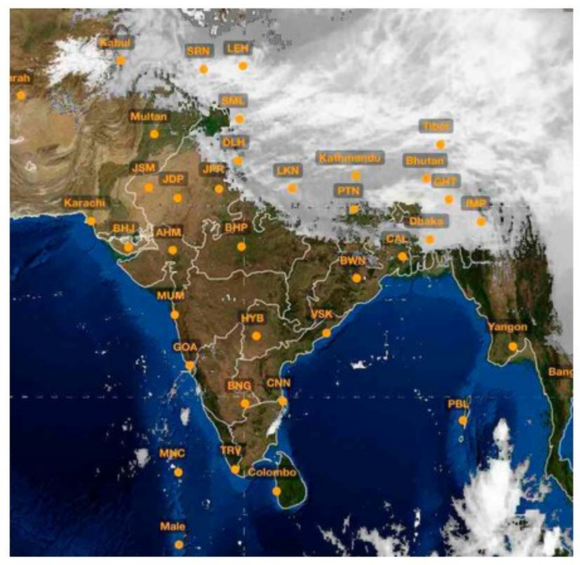
Already, 1,976 encroachments corresponding to an area of 373.4 hectare of forestland have been evicted in Wayanad since January 1, 1977, it said.

The Forest department also said it has undertaken boundary demarcation and consolidation by constructing permanent cairn stones and *'kayyalas'* (dwarf walls).

The process of digitisation of forest boundaries has been initiated in collaboration with the Revenue department.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Thundersquall accompanied with gusty winds/lightning/hail likely at isolated places over Gujarat, Odisha, Telangana, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, central Maharashtra, Konkan & Goa, Karnataka and Kerala. Heat wave conditions likely at isolated places over Saurashtra & Kutch

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	34.6	25.4	Kozhikode	—	36.4	27.4
Ahmedabad	—	40.0	21.6	Kurnool	—	38.8	27.4
Aizawl	—	35.6	22.0	Lucknow	—	36.7	16.4
Allahabad	—	39.5	15.7	Madurai	—	37.3	23.0
Bengaluru	—	34.4	20.5	Mangaluru	—	33.2	26.0
Bhopal	—	35.2	19.6	Mumbai	—	33.2	24.0
Bhubaneswar	—	36.2	25.5	Mysuru	—	—	20.0
Chandigarh	—	34.8	14.2	New Delhi	—	35.0	13.8
Chennai	—	34.5	24.6	Patna	—	36.4	21.0
Coimbatore	—	36.4	21.8	Port Blair	—	31.6	22.9
Dehradun	—	33.3	13.2	Puducherry	—	33.0	24.9
Gangtok	—	21.2	14.3	Pune	—	40.6	25.4
Goa	—	35.0	27.0	Raipur	—	40.3	24.2
Guwahati	—	34.0	16.7	Ranchi	—	34.8	18.0
Hubballi	—	39.0	22.0	Shillong	—	26.0	14.5
Hyderabad	—	37.4	24.0	Shimla	—	25.4	12.6
Imphal	—	30.2	14.6	Srinagar	—	22.9	4.5
Jaipur	—	35.8	17.6	Thiruvananthapuram	—	34.0	26.6
Kochi	—	33.4	27.6	Tiruchi	—	36.3	24.0
Kohima	—	25.5	13.4	Vijayawada	—	36.4	25.4
Kolkata	—	35.2	27.1	Visakhapatnam	—	33.6	27.9

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.49	..43	16	... 124	...123	
Bengaluru	...9	..16	31	 38	...154	
Chennai	.16	8	72	 46	78	
Delhi	.30	..67	42	... 205	...243	
Hyderabad	...7	107	11	... 168	...140	
Kolkata	...3	.10	22	 98	...100	
Lucknow	.22	..44	30	... 135	...132	
Mumbai	...6	154	..2	 82	86	
Pune	..—	..46	94	... 166	...162	
Visakhapatnam	.10	..49	22	 58	95	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Byrnihat, Assam recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 252 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Maihar, Madhya Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 33

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

As students protest, Telangana govt. stakes claim over land

R. Ravikanth Reddy
HYDERABAD

In dissent: University of Hyderabad students protest opposing the proposed auction of 400 acres of land at Kancha Gachibowli.

The Telangana government said it was the sole owner of the 400 acres of land in Kancha Gachibowli village, Serlingampally mandal, on whose ownership a group of students from the University of Hyderabad (UoH) are agitating.

Officials said the 400 acres of land was allotted to a private entity by the then government of Andhra Pradesh in 2004. But the present Congress government has fought against the private entity in the Supreme Court and reclaimed the land.

The UoH does not own any land in this survey and any contention regarding land ownership is contempt of court, as per official statement. Moreover, as is being alleged, the development plans of the government in this land do not include any lake.

The rocks formation would not be disturbed by the new development plan either, it added. The government, in a statement here, said the opposition to the project was purely political and the students were being misled by those opposing the government.

With the consent of the Registrar, UoH survey work was conducted on July 19, 2024, in the presence of university officials, and the boundaries were fixed, the government said.

Denies claim

University of Hyderabad, through a statement on Monday, denied the State government's claim that a Revenue survey was conducted.

Terming the claim as 'misinformation', the letter bearing the signature of the UoH Registrar sought to clarify that no survey was conducted at the said time to demarcate the land.

"The only action taken thus far has been a preliminary inspection of the land's topography," the statement said.

INBRIEF

Protesting ASHA workers cut hair as strike enters 50th day

Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) who have been staging an agitation in front of the Kerala Secretariat demanding better remuneration for the past 50 days, gave a new dimension to their fight on Monday when they chopped off their hair in protest.

High drama unfurled in front of the Secretariat as hundreds of women gave vent to their disappointment over the alleged apathy of the State government towards their protest. They shouted slogans, holding aloft the chopped-off hair. Two ASHAs went a step ahead and tonsured their heads.

'SLBC tunnel rescue teams working round-the-clock'

Rescue teams engaged in tracing mortal remains of the remaining six persons buried under debris in the Telangana Srisailam Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel collapse, which occurred on February 22 morning, are working to restore the conveyor belt for another 100 metres. The Special Officer appointed to oversee the operations, Siva Sankar Lotheti, held a coordination meeting with the team leaders of different rescue agencies on Monday. Mr. Lotheti said that the rescue teams were working round-the-clock despite adverse conditions.

A.P. notifies 51 mandals in 6 districts as drought-affected

The Andhra Pradesh government has notified that 51 mandals in six districts of Kurnool, Nandyal, Anantapur, Sri Sathya Sai, Kadapa and Prakasam have been affected by drought during the north-east monsoon (rabi) season.

The impact of the drought has been severe in 37 mandals while the rest have been moderately affected, the government said and issued an order as per the guidelines prescribed by Government of India Manual for Drought Management-2016.

Beach facelift

More shore: A view of the extended beach formed after six weeks of pumping sand at the Visakhapatnam Beach, on Monday. This was done as part of a beach 'nourishment' work assigned to the Dredging Corporation of India by the Visakhapatnam Port Trust. V. RAJU

Action plan on the anvil to revitalise VSP

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

The Union and State governments are formulating a comprehensive action plan to strengthen the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP).

As part of this initiative, a delegation from the Union Ministry of Steel held discussions with Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Monday at his residence in Undavalli. The discussions primarily revolved around the follow-up actions required after the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government at the Centre sanctioned a package for the revitalisation of the steel plant.

Union Minister of State for Steel Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma, who participated in the meeting, expressed his gratitude to the Chief Minister for deploying the State Special Protection Force (SPF) to ensure the security of the steel plant.

CM holds talks

Additionally, the Chief Minister discussed key issues with the delegation, including regular reviews of the plant's progress and the possibility of restarting the third blast furnace along with the existing two furnaces. Mr. Naidu emphasised that the people of Andhra Pradesh have an emotional connection with Vizag Steel Plant (RINL) and that it is essential to safeguard its interests. He expressed his gratitude to the Centre for considering the State's request and announcing financial assistance for the revival.

Dhruva Space joins hands with satellite services firm in Japan

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

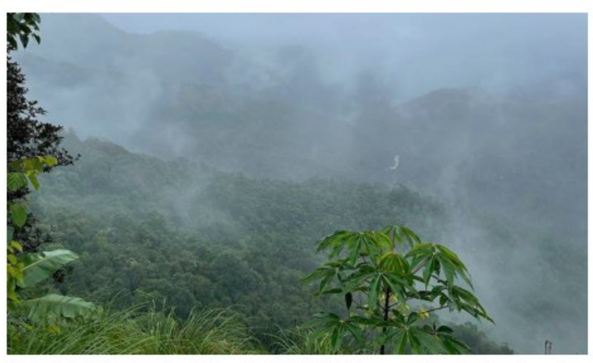
A view of Dhruva Space's 3.8m S&X-band ground station antenna in Hyderabad.

Hyderabad-based Dhruva Space and Japan-based Infostellar on Monday have announced collaboration to explore integration of the Dhruva Space's 3.8m S&X-band ground station antenna in Hyderabad into Infostellar's StellarStation, expanding its global ground station network and enhancing satellite communications interoperability.

Infostellar plans to onboard Dhruva Space's antenna onto its Cloud-based StellarStation platform, making it accessible to its global client base for enhanced satellite ground segment services, upon receiving necessary licenses from the Centre, as per a release. Dhruva Space is India's only commercial ground station solutions provider, it added.

Significant increase in monsoon rainfall in Western Ghats over past 800 years: study

The Hindu Bureau
KANNUR



Eco-sensitive region: The study highlights need for better disaster preparedness and conservation in Western Ghats. K. MURALI KUMAR

A recent study by researchers at the Central University of Kerala revealed a significant increase in monsoon rainfall in the Western Ghats over the past 800 years. By reconstructing Indian monsoon patterns over the last 1,600 years, the study provided key insights into long-term climate variations in the region.

The research, led by Dr. K. Sandeep, Associate Professor in the Department of Geology, was conducted in collaboration with research scholars K.V. Reshma and G.H. Aravind.

The findings, published in *Quaternary International*, offered insights into historical climate patterns in the Western Ghats and stressed on the need for proactive measures to address challenges from an intensifying monsoon cycle. "The long-term increase in monsoon intensity could be contributing to more frequent and extreme rainfall events in recent years," Dr. Sandeep said. He pointed to the devastating landslides and floods in Wayanad and Kodagu in Karnataka in 2018 and 2019 as examples of extreme weather events that may be part of a broader climatic trend.

The research highlights the need for better disaster preparedness, sustainable land-use planning, and conservation in the Western Ghats.

Experts stressed the importance of long-term environmental policies to mitigate risks from intensifying monsoon.

Using a multidisciplinary approach, the team analysed lake sediments from Cheppandikere Lake near Madikeri, Karnataka, to track monsoon intensity over centuries.

Alarming shift

Donald Trump's executive overreach calls for judicial intervention

Secretary of State Marco Rubio has confirmed that there is an ongoing programme in the United States to revoke the visas of foreign students who are "taking activities that are counter to our national interest, to our foreign policy". Reports suggest that several hundred visas have been revoked, which include those held by Indian students. These reports also indicate that the U.S. government is using surveillance of social media activity as a basis for these revocations. Mr. Rubio also referenced the more troubling aspects of the Gaza war protests – Jewish students were reportedly harassed or university buildings were occupied. In his view, if an action would justify denying a visa at the application stage, it is grounds for revocation after issuance. However, this development raises concerns about the U.S. government's stance on the free speech rights of foreign nationals who reside in the country legally. Not all those affected by these visa revocations have been disruptive. The right to free speech is enshrined in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Although the amendment explicitly restricts Congress from curtailing speech, it has long been interpreted broadly. It protects "people", not just "citizens" – though the distinction may have been less defined at the time of its writing.

Whether this right extends to foreign nationals legally present in the U.S. remains a grey area. Various laws – from those of the late 18th century to more recent regulations concerning the impact on U.S. foreign policy – have placed limits on such expression. Yet, historically, foreign students have often been vocal critics of U.S. domestic and foreign policies without facing punitive action. And, university administrations have generally defended the free speech rights of students and academics. Despite its imperfections – both historic, such as the internment of Japanese Americans during the Second World War, and ongoing, such as systemic racial inequalities – the U.S. has been a beacon of liberal values and due process. These are principles admired around the world, often more than its material wealth or professional opportunities. For many, it is the commitment to values such as free speech that makes the U.S. exceptional. That commitment now appears to be at risk. The U.S. system of checks and balances, which guards against the abuse of power, should assert itself – perhaps through judicial intervention – to rein in the overreach by the Trump administration and preserve the freedoms that define American democracy and inspire large parts of the world.

No to regression

Disenchantment with Nepal's political parties is exploited by reactionaries

The violent protests in Kathmandu on Friday, which left two dead, dozens injured and saw arson and looting, were spearheaded by fringe political forces such as the royalist Rastriya Prajatantra Party. Though long relegated to the political margins, the royalist camp has managed to seize upon growing disillusionment with the political establishment. The series of pro-monarchist rallies and demonstrations have been drawing crowds across Kathmandu and other cities, signalling an undercurrent of dissatisfaction with the republic, which is surprising and concerning. Nearly two decades ago, Nepal made a decisive break from monarchy, an institution that had shaped its identity for over 240 years. This was neither a moment of spontaneous outrage nor a casual shift, but the culmination of years of discontent. The turning point came with the royal massacre at Narayanhiti Palace in June 2001, which irreparably damaged the monarchy's image. When Gyanendra Shah ascended the throne after his brother's death, he attempted to reassert absolute authority and return Nepal to the pre-1990 political order. His power grab and crackdown on democratic forces triggered a backlash. The tide turned definitively when Maoist rebels abandoned an armed struggle to join the mainstream democratic process. Their integration, along with the withdrawal of international support – particularly Indian – for the monarchy, sealed the institution's fate. A democratically elected Constituent Assembly (CA) was formed, and in 2008, passed a near-unanimous resolution declaring Nepal to be a federal democratic republic. Despite the political volatility which included two iterations of the CA before the Constitution was promulgated in 2015, Nepal has remained a constitutional republic. Since 2008, power has primarily alternated among the Nepali Congress, which has led the fight for democracy since the fall of the Rana regime; the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), the largest of the leftist parties; and the former Maoist rebels. However, chronic instability, opportunistic alliances, poor governance, and self-serving leadership have plagued the system. The hopes of the CA for inclusive development and justice have largely gone unfulfilled.

Even so, most Nepalis remain acutely aware of the authoritarianism and injustices that characterised the monarchist era. The recent surge in pro-monarchy sentiment is a regressive response to democratic disillusionment. The government must move swiftly to hold accountable those responsible for the recent violence, including any role played by Mr. Shah. At the same time, the ruling party and the opposition must rise to the occasion, restoring public faith by demonstrating the strength, responsiveness, and integrity of parliamentary democracy. That is the surest antidote to calls for a return to monarchy.

INDIA bloc as a beginning of democratic renewal

Varun Santhosh

is a member of the Congress party and former Vice-Chairman of the party's national war room during the 2024 Lok Sabha election

The battle to secure India's democracy and safeguard its constitutional values cannot be won through politics as usual. The ruling party thrives on centralisation and subversion – of institutions, narratives, and decision-making. The Opposition must embrace the opposite: decentralisation, open dialogue, respect for norms, and a politics that listens before it speaks.

The Bharat Jodo Yatra and Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi (and now Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha) showcased this approach. Unlike scripted political campaigns, these yatras were open-ended engagements – with leaders listening as much as they spoke, and communities shaping the agenda rather than merely receiving promises. These were in stark contrast to the ruling party's rigid command-and-control structures. Yet, this lesson, despite its success, has not been fully internalised by the Opposition.

Crucially, these yatras were not just political events but also acts of trust-building. And no one deserves more credit for this than Mr. Gandhi. Dismissed by detractors, undermined by the media, and politically isolated even within his own ranks, he reshaped the conversation in Indian politics – walking, listening, and making space for people's voices. His approach was not about dictating terms but fostering participatory politics, where trust – not slogans and gimmicks – shaped the discourse.

The way Mr. Gandhi transformed '*Samvidhan Khatre Mein Hai* (the Constitution is in danger') from a slogan into a deeply felt public sentiment was no accident. It was the result of sustained engagement, town halls, direct interactions, and a refusal to play politics as usual. The yatras created an environment wherein people felt heard and because they trusted him to listen; they believed him when he displayed a copy of the Constitution in speech after speech and warned about the threats that it faced. This was not just narrative-building; it was trust building.

A reality check

The results of recent State elections provide a reality check. The electoral losses in Maharashtra, Haryana and Delhi are reminders of what happens when the Opposition abandons the listening model and falls back on old habits. Maharashtra showed that a coalition focused on internal negotiations and not grassroots engagement cannot withstand the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s onslaught of money, muscle, and machinery. Haryana demonstrated that mass discontent alone is not enough; it must be converted into political momentum. Delhi was a case study in how arithmetic without chemistry fails and how voters punished the Aam Aadmi Party government's theatrics and gimmicks. In each case, the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) failed its own supporters by taking them for granted.

In Indian classical music, a *jugalbandi* is a performance of equals, where two musicians respond to each other, improvising, and creating something greater than the sum of their parts. The INDIA bloc must embrace this spirit. Instead of a top-down approach, it must empower regional leaders, organisations and movements to take initiative where they are strongest.

The BJP has mastered centralisation, where messaging is uniform and decision-making flows from top down. The Opposition can only counter this by embracing decentralisation – not as an admission of disunity, but as a source of strength.

The yatras succeeded because they rejected the idea that leadership is about control. Instead of issuing directives, they created spaces where local leaderships and movements could shape the conversation with a national leader. Instead of relying on a media ecosystem hostile to the Opposition, they built direct connections with people. Instead of treating politics as a series of transactions, they worked to rebuild trust.

There have been times when the INDIA bloc has struggled with internal coordination, but that is not unusual for a coalition of diverse regional and national parties. Coordination is not just about enforcing decisions. It is about ensuring that every party feels invested in a shared strategy.

From disarray to opportunity

The alliance's struggles in Parliament reflect its broader challenges. Since June 2024 (when the election results were declared), the INDIA bloc has faced difficulties in maintaining unity and effective coordination. While there were flashes of Opposition unity, these were largely fragmented interventions, missed opportunities to hold the government accountable, and an inability to secure key positions such as the Deputy Speaker's post in the Lok Sabha.

Yet, this disunity presents an opportunity for introspection and restructuring. By focusing on shared concerns, be it economic policies, social justice, institutional integrity, or naked expansion of crony capitalism, the INDIA bloc can forge a cohesive strategy that resonates within Parliament and with the public. The alliance must shift from an ad hoc approach to one that is issue based and collaborative. There has already been a subtle shift in the ongoing Budget session, where coordination between the parties has been nimble and informal, allowing space for every party to represent its key issues in Parliament such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), food security, delimitation, voter rolls, while uniting against gross misconduct either by the Treasury benches or even the Presiding Officer. This would not have been possible with a centralised Secretariat of the INDIA bloc issuing diktats.

A credible vision for India's future must emerge from the ground up, shaped by youth, workers, farmers, entrepreneurs, and marginalised communities, and not dictated by elites. Listening must guide policy. The INDIA bloc must engage directly with those affected by economic shifts particularly in the use of Artificial Intelligence and automation, which are reshaping industries. In a recent parliamentary address, Mr. Gandhi warned that AI will redefine employment and production. Policies must ensure that technology enhances – rather than displaces – livelihoods by balancing innovation with worker protections.

Small and medium businesses, startups, and entrepreneurs struggle under monopolised markets and political patronage. A government that prioritises corporate allies over public welfare erodes social justice, weakens institutions, and deepens inequality. This is why a caste census is not just about representation; it is about aspiration. The vast majority of Indians remain locked out of education, employment, and entrepreneurship networks. Justice and opportunity must be built on data and evidence, and not assumptions.

The ruling party has mastered top-down control of narratives, dictating what the nation should care about. The Opposition must disrupt this by listening to people's real concerns and letting them shape the national conversation. This cannot be an election-season exercise. It requires sustained engagement, mobilisation, and action.

Listening as a political act

The biggest challenge facing the INDIA bloc is not just voter scepticism but also disengagement. Many who oppose the BJP are disillusioned, feeling that electoral politics offers little real choice. This is why the yatras resonated – they did not just ask for votes. They invited people to participate.

This approach must now be internalised. The alliance must engage with people's movements, not just for photo-ops, but as partners in shaping a political vision. It must demonstrate that it is listening – not just to its own leadership but also to workers, farmers, youth, entrepreneurs and marginalised communities.

Most importantly, it must recognise that listening is not passive. It is an act of political resistance. In an era where the ruling party seeks to impose a single narrative, creating spaces for alternative conversations is itself a challenge to power. The Opposition must not just oppose. It must offer a compelling, inclusive, and participatory alternative.

The yatras showed what is possible when politics is not confined to election cycles, when leaders listen rather than just speak, and when mobilisation is for continuous engagement rather than a campaign gimmick.

If the INDIA bloc learns this lesson, wherein it builds trust, frames a clear vision, and listens before it speaks, it will not just be an electoral alternative. It will be the beginning of a democratic renewal that India desperately needs.

The views expressed are personal

The INDIA bloc needs to engage with people's movements and demonstrate that it is listening to the real India

NEP 2020 in the classroom, from policy to practice

Suman Bhattacharjea

is the Director of Research at the ASER Centre

Shweta Bhutada

is the Senior Project Lead at the ASER Centre

Akanksha Bisht

is a Content and Research Associate at the ASER Centre

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 frames the universal acquisition of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) as an urgent national mission. Since the release of the policy, the central and State governments have put in enormous efforts into programmes intended to meet the goal of ensuring that every child acquires FLN by Class two, the end of the newly designated 'foundational stage' of education for three to eight year olds.

Findings from the nationwide Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024 survey that was released recently provide some indicators of the percolation of these policy pushes to individual schools. For example, more than 80% of the 15,728 rural schools across the country that were visited as a part of the survey reported having received a directive from the government to implement FLN activities for Classes one to three. In over 75% of these schools, at least one teacher had received in-person training on FLN.

There is an awareness

A deep dive into 24 Class two classrooms in eight States earlier this year provided glimpses of how these changes are translating into practice on the ground. The first conclusion that was clear from observations of the teaching practice of these teachers, and subsequent conversations with them, is that the rationale for why FLN is important appears to have been communicated clearly and on scale.

In the eight States and in most of the schools that the writers of this article visited, teachers articulated this new focus and, for the most part, approved of it. Aspects of the new approach that required attitudinal shifts rather than new pedagogical practices were visible in their classrooms.

However, the challenges and opportunities facing teachers vary substantially, depending on the local context. For example, a classroom that comprises a large number of Class two students with limited space to move about requires a different approach than one with students from several different grades sitting outdoors. Several teachers said that they have limited opportunities to identify and discuss these challenges during training workshops. Creating spaces for practice, discussion and adaptation may be the key to increasing uptake.

Support for teachers

Consequently, post-training support systems to teachers are of vital importance. Here, States differ markedly in the amount and the type of support that they provide. In some States, the teachers we spoke to were unable to name any form of support available to them post training. In others, trainers were available to be consulted if teachers wished to do so. In still others, regular "monitoring" visits from officials ensured that the focus on FLN was not lost, but the focus was on compliance with data collection protocols rather than teaching-learning in the classroom. In just a couple of cases, teachers spoke about block- or district-level officials actually demonstrating how to do a particular activity in the classroom.

Without the space to practise and then adapt the new methods and materials as needed, teachers are often unable to make full use of the guidelines and materials provided to them. For example, even though the focus on using teaching-learning materials (TLM) in the classroom was clear to all the teachers, in every case where some form of TLM was observed, it was evident in 'demonstration' mode – meaning that in all but one case it was the teacher using the TLM, and not the students. Getting TLM into students' hands requires more thought and flexibility, very often about practical, rather than pedagogical, questions. For example, in States where teachers are given funds to make their own TLM rather than provided with ready-to-use kits, teachers were worried about the material getting damaged (torn or broken) as they would have to remake them. Others had no space to store TLM in the classroom, while the rest who had been provided with TLM kits were unclear about how and when to use them.

Issue of syllabus completion

Perhaps, most crucially, decisions on what and how to teach are still based primarily on syllabus completion. At the State level, continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE) often takes the form of formative and summative assessments of curriculum content, conducted in traditional pen-and-paper format. Although teachers in several States talked about monthly FLN-specific assessments, almost none spoke about using FLN assessment results to inform their classroom practice. Resolving the inherent contradiction between ensuring universal FLN and syllabus completion is a question that the system has yet to reckon with in a systematic way.

There is little doubt that some things have changed for the better since the rollout of National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN) Bharat – the mission that lays out detailed guidelines on how FLN goals should be met on the ground and adaptations across the country. The clear focus on FLN and its resultant visibility in schools and among teachers, is in itself a step forward. This is reflected in the fact that for the first time since the ASER survey began 20 years ago, learning levels at the foundational stage have improved across the country, a change mostly driven by government schools. This focus must be maintained in the years ahead to ensure that all children in India acquire these basic skills.

Observations from 24 classrooms in eight States across India point to some change

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Lessons from the tremors

Our hearts go out to the people of Myanmar and Thailand who have faced the fury of nature. In a way, it is also a reminder that nature is all powerful. Acting against nature in various forms such as destroying forests and not keeping global warming under check will result in other calamities.

This is also an opportunity for man to realise his follies and desist from annihilating his brethren.

Tharcius S. Fernando,
Chennai

Stray dogs, dangers

I am sure that this is an issue that resonates across many parts of India. The danger posed by stray dogs is rising especially in Kanyakumari district. Over the past four years, over 50,000 people have been bitten by dogs, with many requiring hospitalisation. Stray dogs scavenge from garbage bins and whatever is available by the roadside. Some dogs carry rabies. Although the government carries out sterilisation through Animal Birth Control (ABC) centres, there does not seem to be much change on the ground. The municipal corporation must enforce dog ownership by issuing pet licences and ensuring responsible pet care. Dog owners should be educated on the importance of monitoring the health of their pets with regular veterinary checks.

Dr. Arunachalam,
Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu

Six-run win over CSK

Once again, Chennai Super Kings did not play to its true potential and lost to Rajasthan Royals ('Sport' page, March 31). Nitish Rana, in particular, was outstanding. The main reason why CSK has not been off to a good start is due to the batting order, eventually leading to a collapse like nine pins.

Parthasarathy N.,
Chennai

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

Thinking beyond population count

S. Irudaya Rajan
Chair at the International Institute of Migration and Development, Kerala

U.S. Mishra
Honorary Visiting Professor at the International Institute of Migration and Development, Kerala

The discourse on delimitation and financial devolution has caused an uproar in Parliament and some State Assemblies and poses a threat to the federal character of our nation. The development divide in India has its own derivative on the demographic divide which needs recognition in the calculus of delimitation and financial devolution. The expiry of the constitutional freeze on the number of parliamentary seats is very near and has generated anxiety with regard to the political representation of peninsular States and those in the north.

The history of the delimitation exercise in India during 1951-71 indicates that the number of Lok Sabha seats was increased in response to the population increase that resulted in the population representation per seat. This rose from 7.3 lakh population per Lok Sabha seat in 1951 to 10.1 lakh population per seat in 1971 when the total number of seats reached the current size of 543. The freeze in this number since 1971 extends till 2026. Considering the trend of increasing the number of seats with the rising population, the total number of seats in accordance with the projected population size in 2026 amounts to 753 and the population representation per seat will be around 20 lakh. With this ratio, the reduced share of population in peninsular States may well be represented by a fewer number of seats when compared with States such as Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and others, which are lagging behind on demographic progress.

Political representation

This anxiety about political representation is genuine and was first confronted by the 15th Finance Commission when the population weight in the devolution exercise was substituted by 2011 data in place of the 1971 data. The Commission suggested weightage to demographic performance along with population performance. This revision increased the weight of the population component from 0.15 to 0.27 and serves as a balancer across States with a greater population count and poor demographic performances, and States with a lower population count and better demographic performances.

The time has come to go beyond population size as the lone yardstick of allocation and determination of political representation. It is humorous to hear the argument that the southern States won't lose a single seat in the delimitation exercise while the northern States will gain seats. There are multiple concerns that need attention in this delimitation exercise. The first is whether every seat should have an average representation of 20 lakh population and therefore an upper limit in the representational strength needs to be adopted that would ensure expansion of the size of the Lok Sabha with the rising population size of our nation. However, the contention lies in its regional distribution without distorting representation to an unacceptable level. A middle path to be consiudered could be population density instead of absolute population numbers. This is already the prevailing convention of seats in the north-east which is already represented by a lower population size when compared to the urban centres of the country. Such an alternative would perhaps work out better given the fact that a lower population size may well be associated with a relatively greater density and a greater population size with a smaller density. Further, even maintaining the status quo may require a proportionate rise in allocation of seats once the overall target is decided with an aggregate norm of population representation per seat.

The demographic wisdom therefore is to think beyond population count as a singular yardstick of allocation or devolution. In the devolution exercise carried out by the 15th Finance Commission, these aspects were debated and a middle path was worked out that led to the introduction of demographic performance in the population component. Another sincere caution as regard to the population-based reading of any outcome needs a consideration of its characteristics and composition. The proposed exercise of delimitation and allocation would not escape this feature given the complexity of gender- and caste-based reservation of the said allocation. In each and every sphere, the population-based standardisation has been on its gross count leading to a per capita measure which is often quite misleading. This is getting adopted on a wider scale in the current SDG environment of generating indicators indiscriminately. We name it as per-capita hangover that does not enable scientific comparison (temporal or cross-sectional) of the state of affairs. The characteristic and composition of population remains paramount in the assessment of needs and entitlements on the one hand and rights and privileges on the other. Hence, a raw population count being in the denominator without accommodating characteristic differences assumes equal for unequals.

A demographic outlook

A demographic reading of a population therefore involves recognition of all potential characteristics and attributes to weigh them and differentiate while making any comparative construct involving population count. Population is beyond a mere head count on issues of representation and allocation which is largely overlooked in common practice. Therefore, a demographic outlook remains the key to resolving the prevailing debates and controversies.

The time has come to go beyond population size as the lone yardstick of allocation and determination of political representation

The back-slapping men's club

The cacophony around honey traps threatens to subsume cases of sexual abuse

STATE OF PLAY

S. Bageshree
bageshree.s@thehindu.co.in

In 2012, Ministers in the then BJP government in Karnataka, Laxman Savadi and C.C. Patil, were forced to resign from the Cabinet after they were caught on camera purportedly watching a porn clip. The two, besides the owner of the phone, Krishna Palemar, who also resigned, eventually emerged unscathed in the inquiry by the House committee for "lack of evidence." This incident is among the many in Karnataka that are referred to as "sex scandals" – an umbrella term that is used to refer to a range of sexually inappropriate behaviours. BJP leader Ramesh Jarkiholi and Congress leader H.Y. Meti also had to resign on grounds of sexual impropriety. But the 2012 case stood out because it unfolded on the floor of the House.

This year, the Legislative Assembly in the Congress-ruled State was witness to a Minister voluntarily narrating the story of another "scandal". Prodded by BJP MLA Basanagounda Patil Yatnal (expelled from the party since then for anti-party activities), Minister for Co-operation K.N. Rajanna told the House that there had been efforts to "honey trap" him and many others to ruin their public image and political careers.

He told the Assembly that 48 leaders from across parties, including some national-level leaders, had been honey-trapped. Some had been forced to take injunction orders from courts in the fear that clips of them in compromising positions with women might get circulated or aired by TV channels. He expressed

concern over the ignominy Karnataka had earned as a "CD and pen drive factory" and asked the Home Minister to institute an inquiry to know the "producers, directors and actors" of these CDs. He called it a *pidugu* (epidemic) that had sullied Karnataka's image.

In the same vein, Home Minister G. Parameshwara called it "*maryadeya prashne* (a question of honour)" of both the House and its members and assured a high-level probe into the matter. Five days later, Mr. Rajanna submitted a memorandum to the Home Minister, and a Criminal Investigation Department inquiry has begun into the allegations. However, the Minister has said that his official residence where the alleged honey-trap attempt was made did not have CCTV cameras, which means there is no video evidence.

The political messaging behind the entire episode in the faction-ridden Karnataka Congress – with loyalists of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy D.K. Shivakumar, who is aspiring for the top post, divided into two camps – has not escaped anyone's attention. Mr. Rajanna is identified with Mr. Siddaramaiah's camp and has said repeatedly that the Chief Minister will complete his term. When asked about Mr. Rajanna subtly pointing fingers at him, Mr. Shivakumar denied any role in it, but went on to ask how anyone can be honey-trapped if the victim was not a willing party.

What is missing in this drama is the dangerous tendency to put the so-called honey trap attempts and cases of blatant sexual abuse all into one basket. While politicians need not live up to high Victorian standards of sexual morality (Mr. Rajanna confessed that he is "neither Sri Ramachandra nor Harischandra"), the line between consensual liaisons of any kind and sexual abuse cannot be blurred.

Mr. Rajanna, speaking in the House, pointed to the Opposition benches and said that "*paapa* [poor] Revanna" and his family members too had been victims of this "epidemic". This is shocking from a Minister whose government has instituted an inquiry over former JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna allegedly raping numerous women, and making videos of his act. Based on complaints of women, an investigation is on and he is currently in jail. How pen drives containing these clips got into the public domain just before Lok Sabha elections is a question that needs to be investigated separately and cannot be used to obfuscate the alleged abuse of women itself.

In the House, BJP MLA Munirathna, also being probed on complaint by a woman that he had raped her, recorded the act, and used the video to blackmail her to honey-trap his political rivals, also expressed sympathy for Mr. Revanna. The MLA, who was arrested and is out on bail, said that his grandchildren were facing humiliation because his reputation has been sullied.

One hopes that this back-slapping men's club does not undermine the seriousness sexual abuse cases in the zeal to protect their "honour".

Among Ministries, Home Affairs 'dropped' most assurances

Dropped assurances in Parliament involved issues related to the Pulwama terror attack and the rewarding of policemen allegedly involved in fake encounters

DATA POINT

Nitika Francis
Srinivasan Ramani
Vignesh Radhakrishnan

Since 2014, the Ministry of Home Affairs made 421 assurances in the Lok Sabha and 338 assurances in the Rajya Sabha, but 'dropped' close to 15% and 12% of them, respectively – the highest such share among all the Ministries on both floors of the House.

During the course of a reply or a discussion on the floor of the Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha, if a Ministry gives an undertaking which involves further action on the government's part in reporting back to the House, it is considered an assurance. The parliamentary process is meant to act as a watchdog for the people's rights, and so, the Committee of Government Assurances was formed in 1953 to make sure promises made in Parliament by the executive are implemented.

An assurance is considered to be "pending" if it is not fulfilled within three months of the date on which it was made. After this, the corresponding Ministry must either apply for an extension of this period or request for the assurance to be "dropped".

The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs keeps track of these assurances and publishes their status on the Online Assurance Monitoring System (OAMS) portal. According to the website, nearly 65% of the assurances made in 2024 in Lok Sabha were pending as of March 24. In the Lok Sabha, about 44% of the assurances made in 2023 and 18% made in 2022 are still pending.

For instance, an Adani Group-related query made on March 24, 2023, by Congress MP B. Manickam Tagore questioned the status of completion of government-constructed ports. It implored the volume of trade taking place in Adani-owned ports when compared to State-owned ventures. The assurance made in reply to this question remains pending ever since.

Moreover, between 2014 and 2022, the share of assurances dropped, ranging between 5 and 11% **(Chart 1).** For instance, in 2021, Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra raised the matter of investigating the Adani Group and the various foreign portfolio investors owning stakes in their companies. The Finance Ministry provided certain details and stated that SEBI was investigating the matter. This assurance was later dropped.

Similarly, nearly 66% of the assurances made in 2024 in the Rajya Sabha were pending as of March 24. In the Rajya Sabha, about 36% of the assurances made in 2023 and 24% made in 2022 are still pending. Also, between 2014 and 2022, the share of assurances dropped, ranging between 2% and 15% **(Chart 2).**

Charts 3A and 3B show the Ministries with the highest shares of dropped and pending assurances between 2014 and 2024 in Lok Sabha. **Charts 4A and 4B** show the same for the Rajya Sabha.

As noted earlier, the Home Ministry dropped the most assurances across both Houses. For instance, former Lok Sabha MP Sirajuddin Ajmal's question in 2014 on the State-wise number of reported terrorist attacks along with the number of terrorists arrested and killed was not answered and the assurance was dropped by the Home Ministry. Lok Sabha MP Asaduddin Owaisi's question to the Home Ministry in 2014 about the 'out of turn promotions' and 'gallantry awards' allegedly given to policemen involved in fake encounters was also dropped. The Home Affairs Ministry also dropped both questions asked by Congress MP Manish Tiwari on the Pulwama terror attack in 2019 and 2020.

Finance, Law and Justice, Road Transport and Highways, and Railways featured among the top five Ministries that dropped the most assurances across both Houses.

Broken assurances

The data for the charts were sourced from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs' Online Assurances Monitoring System

Chart 1: The chart shows the share of pending and dropped assurances in **the Lok Sabha** between 2014 and 2024 (in %)

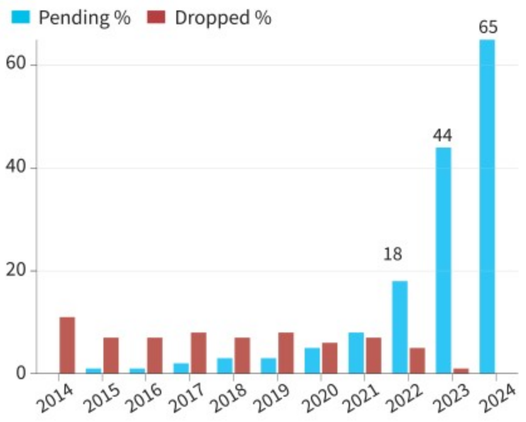


Chart 3: The Ministries with the highest shares of dropped and pending assurances in **the Lok Sabha** between 2014-2024

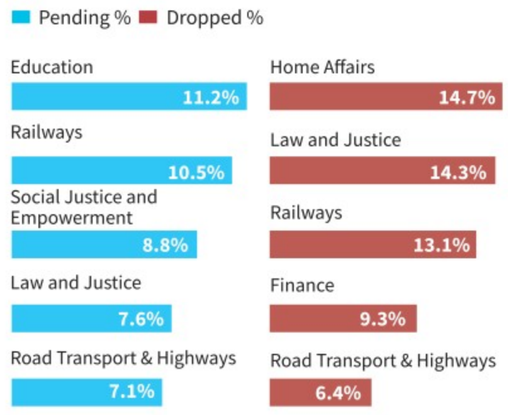


Chart 2: The chart shows share of pending and dropped assurances in **the Rajya Sabha** between 2014-24 (in %)

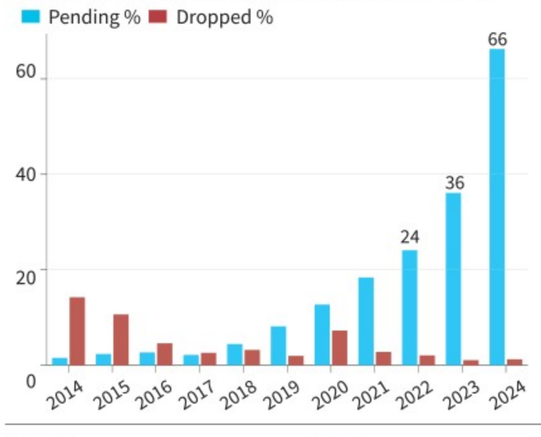
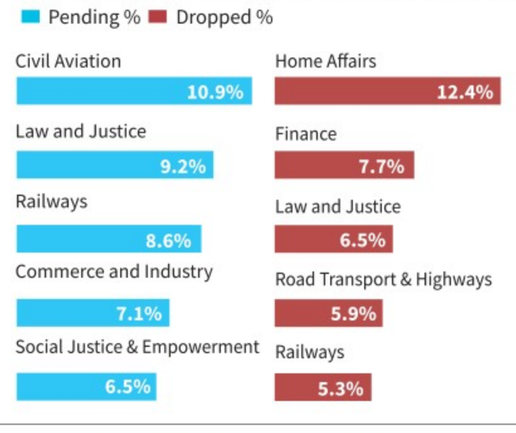


Chart 4: The Ministries with the highest shares of dropped and pending assurances in **the Rajya Sabha** between 2014-2024



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 1, 1975

Taiwanese trawlers seized 100 km. from Madras

Madras, March 31: The Indian Navy yesterday seized two Taiwanese fishing trawlers in Indian territorial waters off the Krishnapatnam coast about 100 km. north of Madras.

The trawlers, Kwang Jann III and V, now lying in Madras, have been handed over to the police. The crew members, all Chinese, were being interrogated by the Immigration officials. The Naval Headquarters at Delhi has been informed.

INS Dharshak, under the command of Capt. K.L. Chopra, which was ordered to make the seizure, sped about 500 km. to the spot, where the trawlers had spread their nets. This is an area abounding in fish.

An armed party, boarded the trawlers as a Navy helicopter gave security cover by hovering over the trawlers.

The 19 crew members in one trawler and the 17 in the other offered no resistance. There were no firearms on board the two vessels.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 1, 1925

The Madras sea bathing club

The Hon. Dewan Bahadur T.N. Sivagnanam Pillai, the Minister for Development, and Lt.-Col D.G. Rai, I.M.S., who take keen interest in boating and sea bathing had for some time been thinking of starting a sea bathing club and a boat club in Madras, to which all classes and all communities, irrespective of caste, creed, or political opinion, would be admitted. With this object they consulted their friends who readily responded to the idea. They took up this suggestion and inspected the South Sea Beach with the Hon. the Minister for Development and Lt. Col. Rai with a view to select a suitable site for the club. They selected the sea frontage opposite to the Office of the Inspector General of Police, Mylapore, as the most suitable one as the slope into the water was gentle in that portion. But as great many children and their mothers visit that place and spend their time in the evenings that site was given up, in favour of another portion, equally good, the portion of the sea little to the north of the Beach facing the Lloyd's Road and the Queen Mary's College for women. A strong committee has been formed with the Development Minister as President and as Lt.-Col Rai as Secretary and many leading members including some of the High Court Judges have joined the club as members.

From Page One

Govt. pushes hard to clear Waqf Bill

He added that the Opposition's 'propaganda' is harmful for the country.

The Minister, while extending Id wishes, added that he is "proud" to say that minorities are the "safest" in India and enjoy the "best" rights of freedom.

Urging political parties to participate in the debate on the Bill in Parliament, Mr. Rijiju said that the legislative process has undergone a record number of consultations and deliberations over the Waqf Bill. He welcomed the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council asking MPs from the State to back the Bill.

"It is the duty of those in politics to care for and address problems and challenges faced by our people," he said.

"For example, hundreds of families in Munambam, Kerala, have suffered and continue to seek a solution to protect their properties and homes. This act is not against any community – that is propaganda being spread to poison minds of some," Mr Rijiju said. He too asked MPs from Kerala to support the Bill in the interest of all people and refrain from 'appeasement politics'.

The Union government, on July 28, 2024, had tabled the Bill in Parliament proposing the inclusion of non-Muslims and Muslim women on the Waqf boards. The amendment proposes to strip the boards of powers to declare a property as 'waqf'. In August, a 31-member Joint Parliamentary Committee was set up to review the Bill.

Return of Bangladeshis up after clampdown

In the past 13 months, as many as 2,355 undocumented Bangladeshis were also apprehended as they were trying to enter the country. Also, 153 people from other nationalities, including Myanmar, were apprehended along the Bangladesh border during the same period.

A senior government official said the agencies maintained a record of all apprehensions at the border, along with the entry and exit of undocumented Indians.

From January 1, 2024 to March 21, 2025, 533 Indians were apprehended at the Bangladesh border – 237 while entering the country, and 296 while they were exiting India.

Bangladesh witnessed significant political changes in August 2024, following the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

A senior Border Security Force (BSF) official explained how they determined if an undocumented person was from Bangladesh or India. "We have ways to check their identity through local sources as, usually, we have a record of people living within few kilometres of the border. Dialect [spoken], and phone records also provide clues. Those apprehended at times confess also," the BSF official said.

Another BSF official said that to avoid legal cases that went on for years, they had also been pushing back undocumented migrants in coordination with Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB).

"Since the MHA's directive to identify and deport illegal Bangladeshis, we have seen a surge in the number of such people voluntarily leaving the country. There could be other reasons also. Before they leave, their biometrics are recorded," the official said.

Around 300 Aadhaar cards and other identity papers, including driving licenses, PAN cards, and voter ID cards, found in the possession of Bangladeshi nationals, were cancelled in the past one year, after the BSF wrote to the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) and other government agencies.

Kathua hunt: 3 militants cornered by forces

Villagers had earlier confirmed the movement of "escaped militants" in Kathua. "Three militants, young and sporting beards, in black uniform came to our house looking for food on Sunday afternoon. They barged into our kitchen. They had water and took away rotis. They offered money but my grandmother declined. They left without much conversation," one of the inmates of a house in Kathua's Rui village said.

Rui village is a few kilometres away from the encounter site, where two militants and four policemen were killed in the gunfight.

It was on March 23 that local residents spotted a group of more than five militants that infiltrated into Kathua. This triggered multiple anti-militancy operations in the area to track them and their supporters. The militants have already engaged the security forces twice in a gunfight and came across "well-trained in jungle warfare".

Security forces continue to scour the jungles of Kathua to track the escaped militants. "The anti-terrorist operation in Suffain will continue till all the terrorists are neutralised. The J&K Police and the Army are conducting the operation jointly," Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Shiv Kumar Sharma said.

The J&K Police asked locals to keep them informed about any suspicious movement.

J&K Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha visited the families of four policemen who lost their lives in the gunfight in Kathua. "We stand firmly with the bereaved family members in this hour of grief. I assure that the government will extend all assistance and support to them," Mr. Sinha said.

Centre rejects U.S. media report claiming HAL sent sensitive tech to Russia

The Indian entity has scrupulously followed all its international obligations on strategic trade controls and end-user commitments, says External Affairs Ministry following news report by *NYT*

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

The External Affairs Ministry on Monday said a U.S. media report that claimed state-run defence major Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) supplied items sourced from a British company to Russia was "factually incorrect and misleading".

The Ministry came to HAL's defence after a report in the *New York Times* (*NYT*) alleged that Techtest, part of British aerospace manufacturer H.R. Smith Group, sent critical components to HAL, which, in turn, sent them to the Russian arms agency Rosoboronexport.

While Russia attracted Western sanctions in the aftermath of the Ukraine war, India's defence trade with Moscow continued given its dependence on Russian military hardware.

MEA defends HAL

NYT report said British aerospace firm H. R. Smith Group sent critical components to HAL, which in turn sent them to Russia

- The External Affairs Ministry said the report "has tried to frame issues and distort facts to suit a political narrative"
- HAL has "scrupulously followed all its international obligations" on strategic trade controls and end-user commitments, the Ministry said
- It also noted that India's robust legal and regulatory framework on strategic trade continues to guide overseas commercial ventures by its companies

"The said report is factually incorrect and misleading. It has tried to frame issues and distort facts to suit a political narrative. The Indian entity mentioned in the report has scrupulously followed all its international obligations on strategic trade controls and end-user commitments. India's robust legal and regulatory framework on strategic trade continues to guide overseas commercial ventures by its companies," the Ministry said.

The *NYT* report said the British company sold sensitive technology worth almost $2 million to HAL during the period 2023-24. It did not specify if H.R. Smith's products had indeed landed up in Russia through HAL but said records "show that, in some instances, the Indian company received equipment from H.R. Smith and, within days sent parts to Russia with the same identifying product codes".

According to the report, Techtest made 118 shipments of restricted technology to HAL in 2023 and 2024. On September 2, 2023, it sold HAL two shipments of restricted equipment.

"Nineteen days later, the Indian company sold parts to Russia with matching identification codes," the report said.

The British company sold another shipment of "restricted technology to India" on February 4, 2024, the report said, adding "Eighteen days later, Hindustan Aeronautics sold equipment with matching codes to a buyer for Rosoboronexport..."

Since the beginning of the Ukraine war, Western countries have imposed sanctions on Rosoboronexport.

Keeping guard: A security official stands guard after authorities disallowed prayers on Id-ul-Fitr at the Eidgah in Srinagar. PTI

Prayers disallowed at Srinagar's Jama Masjid, Eidgah in J&K

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Amid heightened security, Id congregational prayers were held across Jammu and Kashmir on Monday. However, Kashmir's chief cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq accused the J&K Waqf Board of "deliberately disallowing" prayers at Srinagar's Eidgah and Jama Masjid on the occasion.

Extra security

Security was stepped up on Id across the Union Territory (UT) in the wake of recent activities in the Jammu region. Hundreds of locals thronged mosques and shrines to attend special prayers in the morning. Extra security arrangements were made in sensitive parts of the Kashmir valley.

Meanwhile, special Id markets remained abuzz with activity. The biggest congregational prayers were held at Srinagar's Hazratbal shrine, where Chief Minister Omar Abdullah joined prayers.

Kashmir's two prominent religious places – Jama Masjid and Eidgah – could not hold namaz. The Mirwaiz said: "...claims of 'normalcy' are made every day, it is incomprehensible why Muslims are being kept away from religious places and practices".

'Ram and Baam' want to incite riots in West Bengal, warns Mamata at Id rally

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday participated in the annual Id-ul-Fitr prayers on Kolkata's Red Road, and said the Opposition parties in West Bengal, "Ram and Baam (BJP and Left)", are trying to incite riots.

"It is their plan to incite riots, and my job is to stop riots. Stop riots. If you can stop riots, they will disappear on their own. Do not fall into their trap," Ms. Banerjee said at the gathering, seeking cooperation from members of the community.

Speech disruption

The Chief Minister also spoke about the protests during her address at Kellogg College in the United Kingdom, and said the Opposition parties wanted to disrupt her speech delivered last week.

Mamata Banerjee

"Ram and Baam (BJP and Left) got tickets from here, went there, and asked if I am Hindu. I said with pride, I am Hindu, I am Muslim, I am Sikh, and I am Christian, I am Indian, what can you do?" she said. A group of supporters of the Students Federation of India (SFI) had tried to disrupt the speech of the Chief Minister at the U.K. college on March 27.

Targeting Left

Emphasising that she respects every religion, the Trinamool Congress chairperson targeted the Left parties in the State.

"It is a matter of shame that the Red party, which talked of secularism, has joined hands with the *gerua* (saffron). Let them be one. We will remain and will fight alone," she said.

The Chief Minister said that by inciting riots, the Opposition parties want President's Rule imposed in the State.

"They said there are riots, so President's Rule should be imposed. But I asked: what did you do in Manipur, U.P., Bihar, Rajasthan. On Id, they are posing restrictions on what people eat, wear," she said.

Bengal BJP accuses Mamata of insulting Hindu religion during Id celebrations

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

Bharatiya Janata Party leaders from West Bengal on Monday accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of insulting the Hindu religion by referring to a phrase made during her speech at the annual Id-ul-Fitr prayers in Kolkata.

Addressing a gathering on Red Road, the Chief Minister said: "I don't support the *ganda dharm* (dirty religion) which this *jumla* party had created." Ms. Banerjee has often referred to the BJP as the *jumla* (empty promise) party. Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari asked which religion the Chief Minister was referring to when she said "dirty religion".

"Which religion were you specifically referring to? Sanatan Hindu Dharma? What kind of provocative speech did you deliver on Red Road on the occasion of Id-ul-Fitr?" the BJP leader asked.

Suvendu Adhikari SAIKAT PAUL

Politics or religion?

Accusing the Chief Minister of weaponising religion, the BJP leader asked whether it was a religious event or a political programme.

"Why were you deliberately mongering hate with the deliberate intention of creating animosity between communities?" Mr. Adhikari said.

State BJP president Sukanta Majumdar also raised questions on the usage of the "dirty religion" phrase by the Chief Minister. "Is Sanatan Dharma a '*ganda dham*' for West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee? Despite numerous anti-Hindu riots under her watch, she has the audacity to mock Hindus and deride their faith," Mr. Majumdar said.

The war of words has erupted at a time when the BJP leadership is exhorting Hindus to participate in large numbers in Ram Navami processions scheduled for April 6. The remarks have heightened communal divide in the State.

Maoist leader wanted in Telangana, Chhattisgarh killed in Dantewada

Shubhomoy Sikdar
RAIPUR

A senior member of the proscribed Communist Party of India (Maoist), carrying a cumulative reward of ₹45 lakh in the States of Chhattisgarh and Telangana, was killed by security forces during an operation conducted along the Dantewada-Bijapur boundary in Chhattisgarh on Monday, according to a senior police officer.

The deceased, identified as 49-year-old Renuka, who hailed from Warangal district of Telangana, was in charge of the press team for the central regional bureau (CRB) of the Maoists. She edited a magazine for the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC), Superintendent of Police (Dantewada) Gaurav Rai said.

Mr. Rai further detailed that Renuka was killed in a gunfight between Maoists and a joint team comprising the Dantewada District Reserve Guard and Bastar Fighter Force. The encounter occurred in a forested hilly area, which falls under the Geedam police station jurisdiction in the boundary region of Dantewada and Bijapur.

An INSAS rifle, along with other weapons and explosives, was reportedly recovered from the site of the encounter. PTI

Deputy Inspector-General of Police (Dantewada Range) Kamalochan Kashyap added that the security teams had commenced their operation on Sunday, and the exchange of fire began around 9 a.m., lasting approximately two hours.

Following the cessation of the gunfight, the police recovered the body of the Maoist, later identified as Renuka, Mr. Rai reported. An INSAS rifle, along with other weapons and explosives, was reportedly recovered from the site of the encounter.

The police also mentioned that Renuka's husband, Ravi, a CPI(Maoist) central committee member, was killed in an encounter on March 12, 2010 in undivided Andhra Pradesh.

Her brother, Gudsa Usendi, a member of the DKSZC, surrendered in Hyderabad in 2014.

Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range), P Sundarraj, stated that in the preceding 15 months, the bodies of a total of eight State Committee member-level Naxalites, including Joganna, Karthik, Nidhi, Sagar, Sudhir alias Sudhakar, Jagdish, and Renuka, had been recovered. He added that a total of 119 Maoists had been killed in the Bastar region in various anti-Naxal operations this year, and that 135 Naxalites had been killed in separate encounters across the state in the first three months of 2025.

BJP, Trinamool using festivities to promote violence, says CPI(M)

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

For the next week, Left party workers would be on the roads to stand guard and stop clashes

On the occasion of Id, Communist Party of India (Marxist) West Bengal State secretary Mohammad Salim accused both the BJP and Trinamool Congress of using Id and Ram Navami festivities to promote violence and hatred. "Until recently, this trend was unheard of in the State," he claimed.

He also criticised the atrocities on Muslims in the State and across the nation and voiced his support for the Palestinian cause.

"Id is a festival which brings people together. But just like North India, our State, under the government's support, is creating an environment of riot and violence in Malda, Murshidabad... Within a week, it's Ram Navami. During this, BJP, TMC will become one and the same under the RSS flag," Mr. Salim said.

The veteran CPI(M) leader also added that last year, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had defended all incidents of violence involving Ram Navami. He alleged that the Chief Minister was being nurtured by the RSS and hence, she failed to criticise them.Mr. Salim urged religious people to maintain unity and not let political leaders hijack their religion. He announced that for the next one week, Left party workers would be on the roads to stand guard and stop any clashes and riot-like situations and not let communal forces take over Bengal.

Congress seeks law for reservation in private institutions

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Jairam Ramesh

The Centre should bring in legislation to ensure reservation for Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), and Other Backward Class (OBC) communities in private, non-minority educational institutions, the Congress said on Monday.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, in a statement, cited a recent parliamentary panel report to make a pitch for implementing Article 15(5) of the Constitution in private institutions.

Article 15(5) allows the State to make special provisions for the advancement of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes, SCs, and STs, including reservation in educational institutions, both public and private, except for minority educational institutions.

"In its 364th Report on the Demand for Grants for the Department of Higher Education, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth, and Sports recommended new legislation to implement Article 15(5) as well. The Indian National Congress reiterates this demand," Mr. Ramesh said.

The Constitution (93rd Amendment) Act, 2005 came into effect from January 20, 2006, introducing Article 15(5) in the Constitution.

"Nothing in this article or sub-clause (g) of clause (1) of Article 19 shall prevent any special provision, by law, for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes insofar as such special provisions relate to their admission to educational institutions, including private educational institutions, whether aided or unaided by the State, other than the minority educational institutions referred to in clause (1) of Article 30," the Article reads.

The Congress had promised reservation for SCs, STs, and OBCs in its Lok Sabha manifesto, Mr. Ramesh said.

P.A. Sangma had advocated division of northeast: Biren

Former Manipur CM shares video of former LS Speaker's decade-old speech to 'push a narrative against separatism in the State'; Meghalaya CM calls act of using his father's name unfortunate

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

> Manipur is home to 32 indigenous tribes whose identities, cultures, and way of life deserve protection. Refrain from interfering in matters that threaten this delicate balance
>
> **N. BIREN SINGH**
> Former Manipur Chief Minister

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma condemned the use of a decade-old video of a speech of his father, the late Purno A. Sangma, in Parliament, to push a narrative against separatism in Manipur.

On Monday, former Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh said former Lok Sabha Speaker P.A. Sangma once advocated the "dangerous idea" of dividing the northeast into smaller States on ethnic lines.

Sharing a video of the senior Sangma's 2014 speech in Parliament, favouring Kukiland and other smaller States in the region, Mr. Singh said similar attempts were being made today to interfere in Manipur's internal affairs to destabilise the State.

Kukiland or a similar separate administration has been the demand of Manipur's Kuki-Zo people, caught in an ethnic conflict with the majority Meiteis since May 2023. More than 250 people were killed and some 60,000 became homeless in the conflict.

"Manipur's situation is unique. This State is home to several small, vulnerable indigenous communities, whose protection necessitated the implementation of the Inner Line Permit (ILP). The present crisis is not political at its core. It stems from a complex mix of challenges: the drug menace, illegal immigration, destruction of forests, and the systematic pursuit of power by select groups," Mr. Singh wrote on X.

"After years of effort to safeguard our indigenous populations, we have begun to make real progress, such as the implementation of ILP, a hard-won achievement," he further wrote before taking a potshot at the Meghalaya CM.

He said Mr. Conrad Sangma should know that the ethnic violence in Manipur was not spontaneous, but instigated by those who felt threatened and insecure by such kind of progress.

"Does Mr. Conrad Sangma know that Manipur had already initiated border fencing? That the Free Movement Regime (FMR) is now strictly regulated? Has he noticed the alarming rise in unrecognised villages within Manipur's borders?" Mr. Singh wrote.

It was not clear why he targeted the Meghalaya Chief Minister.

"Today, various groups across the Northeast are beginning to recognise the seriousness of FMR, ILP, and border security. Manipur's experiences should serve as a lesson, not a platform for political posturing," Mr. Singh said.

"Manipur is home to 32 indigenous tribes whose identities, cultures, and way of life deserve protection. Refrain from encouraging illegal immigrants or interfering in matters that threaten this delicate balance. The people of Manipur have endured enough. Let us live in peace," he stated.

The Meghalaya Chief Minister reacted on X: "It's unfortunate that @NBirenSingh ji has dragged the name of (L) Shri P. A. Sangma ji. Sangma ji has always fought for the people of the North East, was a strong advocate for different issues and rights of the people of the North East. At this time, everyone's efforts should be towards the restoration of peace and harmony in Manipur and not indulge in political posturing. We all have to work together. I once again appeal to everyone to work for the betterment of the people of Manipur. This is what (L) P A Sangma ji would have wanted".

Those who have faith in Aurangzeb can visit tomb: RSS leader

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

> Those who have faith in him go there [to his tomb]. I don't know who has faith in him or not. In our tradition, we don't worry much about the person after death
>
> **SURESH BHAIYYAJI JOSHI**
> RSS leader

Senior Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leader Suresh Bhaiyyaji Joshi said on Monday that a controversy had been "raised unnecessarily" over Mughal ruler Aurangzeb's tomb. His statement contradicts RSS general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale, who questioned if iconising someone who was "against the ethos of India" was right.

"Aurangzeb died here and his grave was built. Those who have faith in him go there [to his tomb]. I don't know who has faith in him or not. In our tradition, we don't worry much about the person after death," Mr. Joshi said.

Mr. Joshi was responding to a statement made by Maharashtra Navnirman Sena chief Raj Thackeray, who, on Sunday, slammed people for attempting to incite communal tensions in Maharashtra over Aurangazeb's tomb. He cautioned people against viewing history through the prisms of caste and religion, asking them not to rely on "WhatsApp forwards" for historical information.

In another interaction with presspersons, Mr. Joshi, a member of the RSS executive committee, said India had iconised Shivaji who had set an example by building Afzal Khan's tomb. "This shows India's generosity and inclusiveness," he said.

Mr. Joshi's views were backed by the RSS national publicity in-charge, Sunil Ambekar, who said that Aurangzeb was "irrelevant" in the present times.

Different opinion

Mr. Hosabale, however, had a different opinion. He had said Aurangzeb's relevance was brought up many times in the past.

The senior RSS leader had said that if the fight against the British was a fight for the country's freedom, then the fight against those who ruled the country before the British was also a "freedom movement".

Two-day Congress session in Gujarat will seek to highlight party's 'rich legacy' in State

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Grand plans: Top Congress leaders will meet at the Sabarmati Ashram on the evening of April 8. GETTY IMAGES

From holding the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting at Sardar Vallabhbhai National Memorial in Ahmedabad to gathering at Sabarmati Ashram, the two-day-long All India Congress Committee (AICC) session on April 8 and 9 will underscore the party's long-standing legacy in Gujarat.

A senior Congress leader said that the extended CWC, which will adopt a resolution of the AICC session, will meet at the Sardar Patel memorial on April 8.

Though the venue of the meeting could be interpreted as the Congress's attempt to reclaim Sardar's legacy, party insiders strongly denied it. "Even in 2019 we had held a CWC meeting before the Lok Sabha polls. The memorial is managed by a trust that is still headed by former Union Minister, veteran Congress leader Dinsha Patel," the source said.

On the evening of April 8, top Congress leaders would meet at the Sabarmati Ashram. The day-long AICC session would be held at the Sabarmati river front on April 9.

Ahead of 2027 Assembly elections in Gujarat, the AICC session is being seen as Congress's attempt to revive itself in a State where it has been out of power since 1995.

Rahul urges Modi to cancel tenders for offshore mining

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking cancellation of tenders permitting offshore mining along the coast of Kerala, Gujarat, and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Flagging the threat to marine life, the Congress leader said opening up offshore mining blocks to private players without any rigorous assessment of its impact was concerning.

"I write to you to strongly condemn the Central government's decision to permit offshore mining along the coast of Kerala, Gujarat, and Andaman & Nicobar," he said in his letter to the Prime Minister.

Mr. Gandhi said coastal communities have been protesting against the manner in which tenders for offshore mining have been floated without evaluating its environmental impact.

Millions of fisherfolk have expressed grave concerns about its impact on their livelihood and way of life, he said.

"Offshore mining will impact the livelihoods of millions of fisherfolk and irreversibly damage our diverse marine life. The government must immediately revoke this decision," Mr. Gandhi said on his WhatsApp channel.

He also called for rigorous scientific studies to assess the environmental, as well as socio-economic impact of offshore mining.

NEP promotes Indianisation of education system, Sonia should support it: Fadnavis

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

His statement come after Sonia's opinion piece 'The '3Cs' that haunt Indian education today'

Endorsing the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Monday said that the policy promoted Indianisation of the Indian education system and Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) chairperson Sonia Gandhi should support it.

Speaking in Nagpur, Mr. Fadnavis said, "I believe the education system in India is being Indianised now and NEP stands for Indianisation of the education system. If the education policy that Macaulay brought to enslave our country is being replaced and Indianised, I think no one should have any problem with that. Any patriot will support the NEP. I think Sonia Gandhi *ji* should know about this more and must fully support the Indianisation of the education system."

Thomas Babington Macaulay was a British historian and politician who introduced the Western system of education in India in the 19th Century.

Mr. Fadnavis's statement came in response to Ms. Gandhi's opinion piece, "The '3Cs' that haunt Indian education today", published in *The Hindu* on March 31.

She wrote, "The introduction of the high-profile National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, has hidden the reality of a government that is profoundly indifferent to the education of India's children and youth. The Union Government's track record over the last decade has convincingly demonstrated that in education, it is concerned only with the successful implementation of three core agenda items – the centralisation of power with the Union Government; the commercialisation and outsourcing of investments in education to the private sector, and the communalisation of textbooks, curriculum, and institutions."

CBCI seeks unbiased approach to Waqf Bill

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI), which is the permanent association of Catholic Bishops in India, has urged political parties and legislators to adopt an unbiased and constructive approach to the Waqf Amendment Bill.

In a statement on Monday, the CBCI said certain provisions in the existing Central Waqf Act were inconsistent with the Constitution and the secular democratic values of the country. "In Kerala, the Waqf Board has invoked these provisions to declare the ancestral residential properties of more than 600 families in the Munambam region as Waqf land. Over the past three years, this issue has escalated into a complex legal dispute," it said.

कोल इंडिया लिमिटेड
(एक महारत्न कंपनी)

"All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of Coal India Ltd **www.coalindia.in** / respective Subsidiary Company, CIL e-procurement portal **https://coalindiatenders.nic.in** and Central Procurement Portal **https://eprocure.gov.in** In addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal **https://gem.gov.in**".

कार्यालय अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता, जन स्वास्थ्य अभियांत्रिकी विभाग क्षेत्र, बीकानेर
फोन 0151–2226451 ईमेल rj_acebi@nic.in
क्रमांक: अति/बी/अंके.बी./2024–25/14371-400 दिनांक:– 26.03.25
अल्पकालिन ई–बोली सूचना संख्या – अमुज/बी/2024–25/18
राजस्थान के राज्यपाल की ओर से निम्न हस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा जन स्वास्थ्य अभियांत्रिक विभाग एवं अन्य विभागों में रक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नानुसार ई–बोली द्वारा बोली आमंत्रित की जाती है। बोली प्रपत्र वेबसाईट "www.phedwater.rajasthan.gov.in", "www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in" एवं http:/eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर दिनांक 27.03.2025 सुबह 10.00 बजे से 06.04.2025 सांय 6.00 बजे तक उपलब्ध हैं। इस निविदा सूचना संख्या ACEBI/2024-25/18 में कुल 01 कार्य है, जिनकी कुल अनुमानित लागत रू. 653.15 लाख है। इन निविदाओं के एसपीपी पोर्टल पर यूबीएन नम्बर क्रमशः UBN No. PHE2425WLOB12276 है।
(राजेश पुरोहित)
अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियंता
जन स्वा अभि विभाग, क्षेत्र–बीकानेर
DIPR/C/4485/25

कार्यालय अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, संगाय प्रथम जोधपुर
क्रमांक-13147 दिनांक: 26.03.2025
निविदा सूचना संख्या : 23 वर्ष 2024–2025
NIB No.PWD2425A4831
राजस्थान के राज्यपाल महोदय की ओर से पुल निर्माण कार्य हेतु उपयुक्त श्रेणी में सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग राजस्थान में पंजीकृत संवेदकों एवं राज्य सरकार/केन्द्र सरकार के अधिकृत संगठनों/केन्द्रीय लोक निर्माण विभाग/डाक एवम् दूर संचार विभाग/रेल्वे इत्यादि में पंजीकृत संवेदकों, जो कि राजस्थान सरकार के उपयुक्त श्रेणी के संवेदकों के समकक्ष हो, से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में ईटेण्डरिंग प्रक्रिया हेतु ऑनलाईन निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती है।
निविदा से सम्बन्धित विवरण वेब साईट http://dipr.rajasthan.gov.in व http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in व http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है। सम्पूर्ण निविदा प्रक्रिया http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर ऑनलाईन सम्पादित की जायेगी। कार्यवार यू.बी.एन संख्या निम्नानुसार है।
1. PWD2425WSOB17383
(एन.सी. शर्मा)
अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता,
सा.नि.वि. संगाय प्रथम, जोधपुर
DIPR/C/4450/2025

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
Office of the Commissioner, Ayush Department
Gollapudi, Vijayawada, A.P.-521225.
E-Procurement Tender Notice
Lr.No.HMF06-2621967-BUDGET-Homoeo
1) Nature of work: Supply of Homoeopathy Medicines to the Homoeopathy Hospitals & Dispensaries of all (4) Zones through e-procurement **(Tender Id: 794150) www.apeprocurement.gov.in.** Contact details: Deputy Director (Admin), AYUSH Department, A.P., Vijayawada. Phone: 9949027935. **2)** Estimated cost of the work: **Rs.5,00,00,000/-** (Rupees Five Crore Only). **3)** Date & Time of Downloading of tender document from the website: From **01-04-2025 at 10:00 AM** to **22-04-2025 at 04:00 PM. 4)** Tender Submission closing Date & Time: **23-04-2025 at 05:00 PM.** Other details, Tender Forms with Terms and Conditions, description and specification etc. are available in the Tender Document therein for ready reference and also in official website **https://ayush.ap.gov.in/**
Sd/- Dr.Manjula D.Hosmani, I.R.S.
Secretary to Govt. HM&FW & Commissioner (FAC)
AYUSH Department
DIPR 3649PP/CL, Dt.31-03-2025

भारत सरकार - अंतरिक्ष विभाग / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA - DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
निर्माण एवं अनुरक्षण समूह, एसडीएससी-शार / CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE GROUP, SDSC-SHAR
श्रीहरिकोटा / नेल्लूर (जिला), आं.प्र. / SRIHARIKOTA - 524124
संक्षिप्त ई–निविदा सूचना / Brief E-TENDER NOTICE
सं.शार:सीएमजी सिविल: अनुरक्षण: ई–जन निविदा / No:SHAR:CMGCIVIL:MAINT:E-PT-25/24-25 तिथि/ Date. 28.03.2025
भारत के राष्ट्रपति की ओर से **"सूल्लूरुपेट में पंपन मलजल बहि:स्राव के लिए एचडीपीई 200 मि.मी. व्यास पाइप लाइन प्रदान करना"** (टी/सी–24-088, अनुमानित लागत ₹ 23.65 लाख); **"एसडीएससी शार के अंतरिक्ष केंद्रीय विद्यालय के सामने 32 मीटर x 7 मीटर आकार के अतिरिक्त गलवाल्यूम शीट सहित छत की साईकिल शेड प्रदान करना"** (टी/सी–24-089, अनुमानित लागत ₹ 11.90 लाख); **"एसडीएससी शार के टीओपी एवं केओपी में क्षतिग्रस्त कड़ीबद्ध बाड़ तथा संरचनात्मक स्टील के गेट को बदलना"** (टी/सी–24-090, अनुमानित लागत ₹ 10.59 लाख); **"सूल्लूरुपेट के स्वर्णमुखी नगर आवासीय कॉलोनी में आवासीय क्वार्टरों (बी4/सी/सी2/डी/डी2/इ/ई7) की बाह्य रंगाई–पुताई"** (टी/सी–24-091, अनुमानित लागत ₹ 56.96 लाख); **"एसडीएससी शार, भास्कर अतिथि गृह के रसोई घर में निश्चित परिवर्तन कार्य तथा भोजन कक्ष का विस्तार"** (टी/सी–24-092, अनुमानित लागत ₹ 10.02 लाख) हेतु मद दर ई–निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। निविदा दस्तावेजों को **16.04.2025** को **14:30** बजे तक डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। इच्छुक निविदाकार विस्तृत सूचना के लिए हमारी वेबसाइट **www.isro.gov.in** या **www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO** देखें।
On behalf of President of India, Item Rate tenders are invited through e-tendering; **"Providing HDPE 200 mm diameter pipe line for pumping sewage effluent at Sullurpeta"** (T/C-24-088, Est. cost ₹ 23.65 Lakhs); **"Providing Galvalume sheet roofed cycle shed, SDSC SHAR"** (T/C-24-089, Est. cost ₹ 11.90 Lakhs); **"Replacement of damaged chain link fencing & structural steel gates at TOP & KOP, SDSC SHAR"** (T/C-24-090, Est. cost ₹ 10.59 Lakhs); **"External Painting of Residential Quarters (B4/C/C2/D/D2/E/E7) at SMN Housing Colony, Sullurpeta"** (T/C-24-091, Est. cost ₹ 56.96 Lakhs): **"Extension of Dining Hall and certain modification works in kitchen area of Bhaskara Guest House, SDSC SHAR"** (T/C-24-092, Est. cost ₹ 10.02 Lakhs); Tender documents can be downloaded up to **16.04.2025**, **14:30** hrs. Interested tenderers may visit **www.isro.gov.in** or **www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO** for details.
हस्ताक्षरित- समूह प्रधान, सीएमजी / एसडीएससी शार / Sd/- GROUP HEAD, CMG / SDSC SHAR

ODISHA CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION LIMITED
BHUBANESWAR, ODISHA,
PIN:751012, Tel No.(0674) 2562020,
e-Mail : theoccltd@odishaconstruction.com ;
GSTIN - 21AAACO2571K2ZM
"e"-Procurement Notice No- 61 /OCCL/2024-25 (on-line)
On-line percentage rate tenders are invited for the following work :

Sl No	Name of work	Bid Identification No.	Approx. value of work (Rs. in Crore)	Bid Security (through on-line) transfer / as per DTCN) (Rs. in Crore)	Period of Completion	Availability & Submission of tender of Tender (on-line)
1	Construction of Concrete Dam & Spillway Component Structure of Chheligada Irrigation Project.	OCCL-CGP/05/24-25	155.51 Cr.	1.56 Cr.	18 (Eighteen) Calendar months	From 04.04.2025, 03.30 PM to 24.04.2025, 5.30 PM.

Procurement Officer : Managing Director, OCCL.
Date of Opening of the Tender : 25.04.2025, 12.00 Noon onwards
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal : https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in
CAD-2995
MANAGING DIRECTOR
OIPR-34184/11/0005/2425

SANJAY GANDHI INSTITUTE OF TRAUMA AND ORTHOPAEDICS
(Government of Karnataka Autonomous Institute)
Byrasandra, Jayanagar East, Bengaluru - 560 011 Ph: 080-26564516, 26562500 Grams: SITO Fax: 26565222 E-mail: sitodirector@gmail.com
No. SGITO/e-Tender/Manpower/Outsource/05/2024-25 Date:29.03.2025
TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through KPP Portal Only)
Sanjay Gandhi Institute of Trauma & Orthopaedics, Byrasandra, Jayanagar East, Bengaluru - 11, invites tender from the eligible tenderers through the KPP portal of GOK for:-
Supply of Manpower Services through Outsourcing
The Tenderers can download the documents from: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/** on or after **01.04.2025** and the last date for submission of completed tenders through KPP Portal is **22.04.2025** upto **4:00** PM. The Tender Accepting Authority reserves the right to accept / reject or cancel tender without assigning any reason thereof.
Sd/-
Director
Tender Inviting Authority
DIPR/SI/6002/2024-25

INBRIEF

IFS officer appointed as private secretary to PM

IFS officer Nidhi Tewari has been appointed private secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a Personnel Ministry order said. A 2014-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, Ms. Tewari is currently serving as Deputy Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved Ms. Tewari's appointment as private secretary on a co-terminus basis, said the order dated March 29. PTI

CISF conducts awareness drive along coastline

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel completed a cycle expedition, traversing 6,553 km along India's coastline to connect and empower the local communities, recognising their vital role as the eyes and ears of security forces in safeguarding the nation's maritime interests, CISF said in a statement on Monday. "This first ever such pan India event by a Security Force commenced on March 7 and culminated today [Monday] at the iconic Swami Vivekananda Kendra in Kanyakumari," CISF said. As many as 125 dedicated CISF cyclists, including 14 women personnel, undertook the journey, covering the 6,553 km distance in 11 States and Union Territories in 25 days. "A central tenet of this endeavour was to acknowledge and celebrate the invaluable contributions of local residents as "Tat Praharis" (Coastal Sentinels)," CISF said.

Summer to be warmer this year, El Nino unlikely: IMD

Neutral El Nino conditions will prevail this year, says weather agency; it predicts 'above normal' temperatures during summer months, more heatwave days in several parts of the country

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Climate pattern: El Nino, characterised by a warming of the central equatorial Pacific Ocean, is frequently associated with reduced monsoon rainfall in India. THULASI KAKKAT

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has "ruled out" the possibility of an El Nino in the coming southwest monsoon.

An El Nino, characterised by a warming of the central equatorial Pacific Ocean, is frequently associated with reduced monsoon rainfall in India.

"Based on the climate forecasts, including international ones, we can rule out El Nino for the monsoon. We will most likely see neutral El Nino conditions," M. Mohapatra, Director-General, IMD, said in a briefing on Monday.

In 2023, which was an El Nino year, the monsoon saw a 6% deficit. Last year witnessed an 8% surplus as "neutral conditions" prevailed.

An El Nino implies a temperature rise between 0.5 degree Celsius to 1 degree Celsius in the central Pacific. "Neutral" suggests no such rise. However there have been instances when neutral conditions have led to below-normal rain in India.

The IMD gives its first forecast on monsoon rainfall in April.

'Wait for April forecast'

"We will have to wait for the April forecast to get a sense of the monsoon rainfall this year," Mr. Mohapatra said.

"Regional factors and conditions in oceans surrounding India [Indian Ocean particularly] also have to be considered during forecasts."

Before the monsoon kicks in, however, India will be reeling under "above normal" temperatures during the summer months.

From April to June, India on average reports four to seven heatwave days, defined as temperatures exceeding 45 degrees Celsius or greater-than-five-degrees rise from what's normal in a region.

"Parts of eastern India could potentially see 10 heatwave days this year," said Mr. Mohapatra.

"During the April, May and June (AMJ) hot-weather season, above-normal number of heatwave days are likely to occur over most parts of the north and east peninsula, central India, east India, and plains of northwest India. During April 2025, above-normal number of heatwave days are likely over most parts of east and central India adjoining peninsular India," the agency said in a statement.

In March, several parts of central and southern India reported "above-normal" temperatures and one of the potential reasons was changes in climate due to "global warming", said Mr. Mohapatra.

NITI Aayog to open portal on States' finances today

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The portal will help in benchmarking each State's data against the other and the national figures, the NITI Aayog says

Amid complaints by States ruled by BJP rivals that they face discrimination in sharing of resources, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will on Tuesday launch a website developed by the NITI Aayog and the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) on State finances.

According to the NITI Aayog, the portal will be a "comprehensive repository" of data on social, economic and fiscal parameters, research reports, papers, and expert commentary on the finances of States for 30 years from 1990-91 to 2022-23. The 'NITI NCAER States Economic Forum' portal has four main components, including State reports, data repository, State fiscal and economic dashboard and research and commentary.

The NITI Aayog said in a statement that the State reports will summarise the macro and fiscal landscape of 28 States. The data repository will offer direct access to the complete database categorised across five verticals, including demography, economic structure, fiscal, health, and education. In the State fiscal and economic dashboard, graphical representations of key economic variables will be available. The research and commentary section will have details of extensive research on State finances and critical aspects of fiscal policy and financial management at the State and national levels.

"The portal will facilitate an understanding of macro, fiscal, demographic, and socio-economic trends; easily accessible data and user-friendly format and will also address the ongoing need for consolidated sectoral data in one place. It will further help in benchmarking the data of each State against that of other States and the national figures. It will also provide a forum to policymakers, researchers, and others interested in alluding to the data for informed debates and discussions," the NITI Aayog said.

Ahead of SC hearing, rights bodies ask Centre to defend Forest Rights Act

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

There were widespread protests in 2019 seeking withdrawal of the court's order on eviction for tribal people from forests. FILE PHOTO

Ahead of the Supreme Court hearing on the challenges to the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 114 Adivasi rights bodies and environmental organisations from across the country on Monday wrote to Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram, demanding that his Ministry defend the 2006 law that was brought in to recognise and protect the forest rights of tribal people and other traditionally forest-dwelling communities.

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 also known as the FRA, was challenged in the Supreme Court in 2008 by Wildlife First, an NGO which called for the eviction of people whose FRA claims had been rejected.

In 2019, the court ordered the eviction, and following widespread protests, the Tribal Affairs Ministry intervened, showing procedural lapses in FRA claims approvals. The court stayed the eviction order and called for detailed data on the rejection of claims.

The letter to Mr. Oram, signed by the rights bodies on Monday, said that the review of rejected claims initiated on orders of the Supreme Court had not been carried out by State governments properly, adding that neither the States nor the Centre had taken the exercise seriously.

"This resulted in either no review or haphazard arbitrary reviews resulting in repetition of rejections. State governments have followed their own mechanisms and processes, with some States even using technology that undermines especially the decision-making authority of the Gram Sabhas, and procedure for determining rights as statutorily required in FRA," the rights bodies said in their letter.

'Wrongful denials'

Citing the case of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, the rights bodies said that the use of satellite imagery to verify FRA claims continues to take place without officials visiting the ground to verify them. "The excessive reliance on satellite imagery, without abiding by the list of evidence provided in FRA, has led to wrongful denials of rightful claims," they said, adding that even the Tribal Affairs Ministry had flagged possible issues with the use of technology in the implementation of the FRA.

Lowering tariff will harm interests of farmers : SKM

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha says it will strongly respond to the efforts to open the Indian market to U.S. products . PTI

The National Coordination Committee (NCC) of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), which met in New Delhi recently, has decided to strongly respond to efforts to open the Indian market to products from the U.S.

"This can open flood gates of imports which can unravel Indian agriculture, thus harming the interests of the farmers, small producers and the entire working people," the SKM said in a statement in Delhi on Monday.

The meeting was held against the background of negotiations by the U.S. delegation headed by Brendan Lynch last week. The SKM alleged that the Centre's response was meek on the threat of reciprocal tariffs by U.S. President Donald Trump on exports from India to force reduction of tariffs on the import of goods from the U.S. "Even in Europe, strong anti-American sentiment rises among the people. SKM will strongly respond to the efforts to open the Indian market to U.S. products," the SKM said.

The organisation has decided to support the all-India general strike of workers on May 20 against the move to implement the four Labour Codes.

The NCC had "viewed with serious concern the continuous refusal" of the Union government to address pending issues, including minimum support price and debt waiver, and "the new attack by promoting National Policy Framework on Agriculture Marketing", the SKM's statement said.

India-U.S. tri-service exercise from April 1 to 13

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The fourth iteration of the India-U.S. tri-service Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise, named Tiger Triumph, is scheduled to take place from April 1 to 13.

In a statement released on Monday, the Navy outlined the objectives: "The exercise aims to enhance interoperability for conducting HADR operations and to formulate Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for establishing a Combined Coordination Centre (CCC). This centre would facilitate rapid and seamless coordination between Indian and U.S. Joint Task Forces (JTF) during exercises, crises, and contingencies."

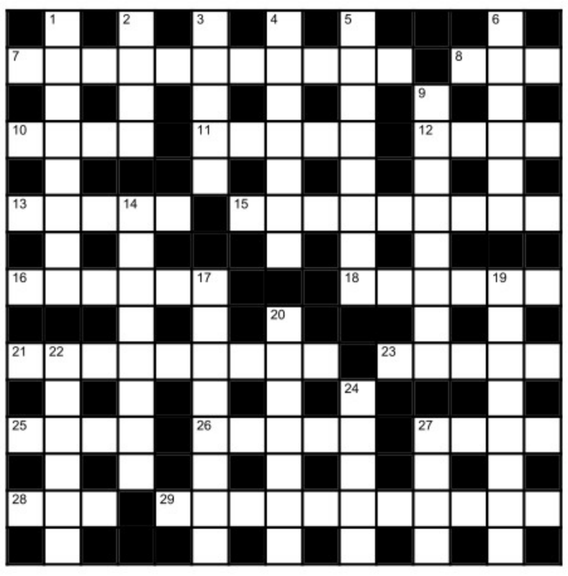
The Harbour Phase is scheduled at Visakhapatnam from April 1 to 7.

TH CROSSWORD + 14447

(set by Hypatia)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

7 Pass secured by end of semester's chosen to be remembered (11)
8 Recipe tossing a bit of mango preserve in container (3)
10 Primarily cozy and friendly eatery! (4)
11 Wipe small baby cuddling close to mother (5)
12 Sign in Gulf country using English instead of Arabic header (4)
13 Gutted transcripts containing old time messages (5)
15 Remove dust from trifle (6,3)
16 Parched after cycling around historic waterway? (6)
18 Humble Mahatma's teachings chiefly inspired poems (6)
21 Supporting one charged after second time for advancement (9)
23 Pose No. 1 in selfie amidst three articles (5)
25 Obligation needing unwavering strength, basically! (4)
26 Bad idea to join guru's final farewell (5)
27 Avoid stay oddly lacking travel permit (4)
28 Basic test with egg soup? (3)
29 Spooner's key more expensive for retailer (11)

Down

1 Asian seen going West with sweetheart, bored by friend (8)
2 Slimy mud over Elephant's head at animal park (4)
3 What can be broken by two girls (5)
4 Criminal or cop is giving a sign (7)
5 Switched vibrate on mobile - literally (8)
6 Some dog ate auntie's creamy cake (6)
9 Occasionally cook more and less for colleagues (8)
14 Mauritius flourishes exporting posh dessert (8)
17 Began rebelling around college and brings down (8)
19 Yeltsin is terrified about dark (8)
20 Partly concealed hole on Iyer's blue underwear (7)
22 Rich and mostly lively city (6)
24 Starts to quit using after knees essentially tremble (5)
27 Contend with women's opinion (4)

SUDOKU

			9	4		2		6
1		6						
4		2		1	8			
	6	8		3		7	2	1
		4				8		
2	1	5		7		6	4	
			7	9		3		2
						5		9
6		9		5	2			

No.SS6476 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

C	O	N	T	R	A	R	Y	■
R	■	O	■	O	U	■	D	■
A	N	T	A	C	I	D	■	E
V	■	T	■	K	■	Y	■	F
E	T	H	O	S	■	A	C	I
N	■	E	■	T	■	R	■	B
■	■	■	B	A	N	D	E	R
A	■	F	■	R	■	K	■	I
F	U	L	L	S	H	I	L	L
F	■	A	■	■	■	P	■	L
I	N	T	E	R	A	L	I	A
R	■	I	■	O	■	I	■	T
M	U	R	R	A	I	N	■	I
E	■	O	■	R	■	G	■	O

G	L	I	D	E	R	■	■	■
I	■	O	■	■	E	■	■	■
E	X	C	E	P	T	S	■	■
■	I	■	E	■	I	■	■	■
A	C	I	D	T	E	S	T	S
B	■	■	■	T	■	T	■	■
E	R	I	L	L	E	R	O	■
A	■	R	■	■	R	■	■	■
L	I	N	G	■	■	■	■	■
P	■	L	■	D	■	P	■	D
S	N	I	D	E	■	■	■	■
C	■	N	■	F	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
P	■	T	■	N	■	■	■	■
I	N	D	E	M	A	N	D	■

Solution to Sunday's Sudoku

7	1	5	3	9	8	4	6	2
4	8	3	2	7	6	5	1	9
9	6	2	1	5	4	7	8	3
2	5	4	6	3	9	1	7	8
1	9	6	7	8	2	3	5	4
3	7	8	4	1	5	9	2	6
6	4	7	5	2	3	8	9	1
8	2	1	9	4	7	6	3	5
5	3	9	8	6	1	2	4	7

FAITH

Hanuman's greatness

Like small children hopping for entertainment, Hanuman crossed the sea to reach Lanka. When Bhima prayed to Hanuman for help in the Mahabharata war, Hanuman replied that he would like to see Lord Rama riding the chariot as Krishna, and he assured Bhima that he would be visible on the flag of Arjuna's chariot.

Sri Kesava Vajapeya Swamy said in a discourse that people should worship Hanuman, the son of Anjana, the most powerful, the slayer of Aksha – the rakshasa who was equal to 100 Ravanas and Indrajiths, the creator of terror in Lanka and who removed the sorrow of Janaki (Sita Devi) (*Anjanaanandanam veeram*).

When all the celestials descended as Vanaras (monkeys), Lord Rudra manifested as Hanuman to play a role and aid Rama. Lord Parameswara told his divine consort that the easiest way to chant the Sahasranama in one verse is to chant the sloka "*Sri Rama Rama Ramethi*." The name Rama appears 16 times in the Vishnu Sahasranama. Hanuman gave life to Lakshmana and removed Rama's grief.

People also worship Hanuman as a five-faced deity (Pancha Mukha Anjaneya). The five faces are those of Garuda, the divine boar (Varaha), Narasimha, Hayagriva, and Hanuman in his original form. As Garuda, he crossed the ocean at an incredible speed to reach Lanka. As Hanuman, he showed his politeness and humility to Sita in Ashokavanam. As the divine boar, he destroyed Lanka. As Narasimha, he slayed all the rakshasas and other warriors of Ravana. Hayagreeva is the deity in charge of education and knowledge. As a learned scholar, he attempted to persuade Ravana to abandon the war with Rama.

Gold price touches record high

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Gold prices for the first time crossed ₹90,000 per 10 gm in India in line with the surge in the price of the yellow metal because of fears of the fallout of the trade war.

On Monday, gold future prices rose more than 1.5% on the MCX.

In the international market, gold price went past $3,125 an ounce to a record high in the January to March quarter, gaining nearly 19%, marking its second-strongest quarter since 1986, when it surged 22.93%.

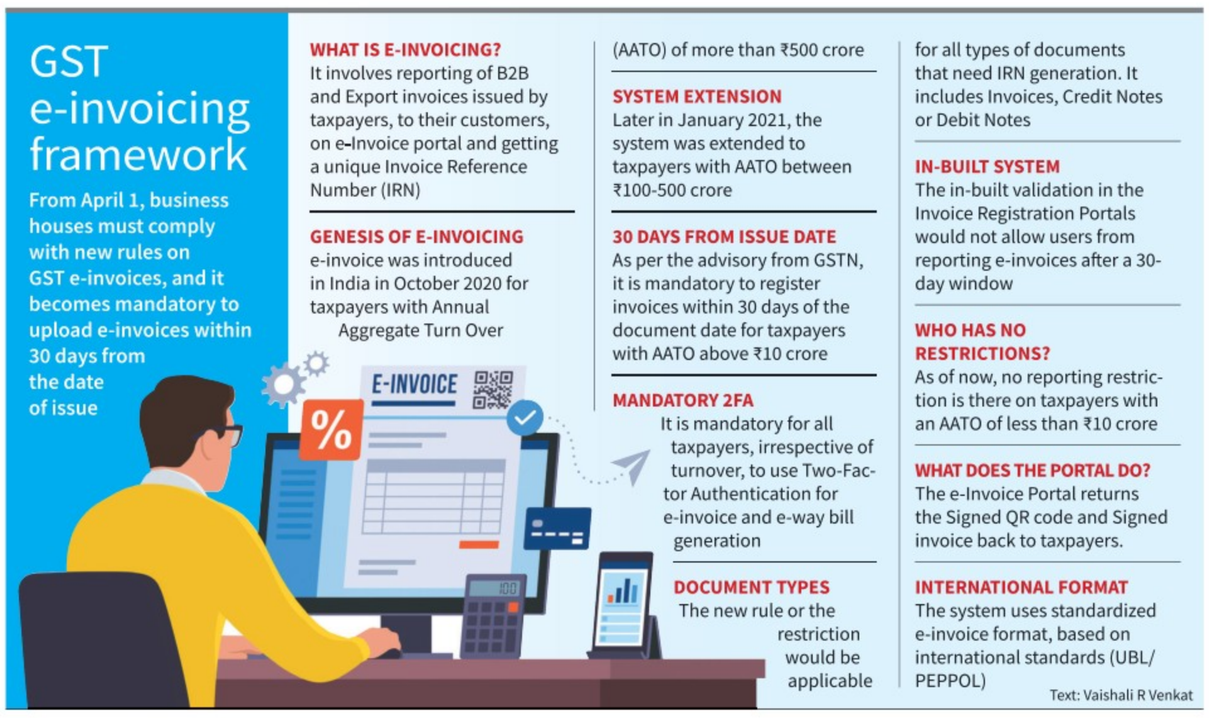
According to analysts, the rally is largely driven by inflation concerns stemming from U.S. tariffs. U.S. President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariffs will be effective on April 2.

Sachin Jain, Regional CEO, India, World Gold Council, said gold's momentum had seen prices rise to historic highs, currently at ₹90,000 for 10 gm.

Temporary impact

"While these high prices seem to have a temporary impact on the jewellery demand, the gold investment demand on the other hand, continues to drive the market, as record domestic prices and inflows into gold ETFs, digital gold, coins and bars reiterate gold's appeal," he said.

Prithviraj Kothari, managing director of Riddi-Siddhi Bullions Ltd., said: "Gold prices have been rising since December 18, which is a result of multiple concurrent worries.


GST e-invoicing framework
From April 1, business houses must comply with new rules on GST e-invoices, and it becomes mandatory to upload e-invoices within 30 days from the date of issue
WHAT IS E-INVOICING?
It involves reporting of B2B and Export invoices issued by taxpayers, to their customers, on e-Invoice portal and getting a unique Invoice Reference Number (IRN)
GENESIS OF E-INVOICING
e-invoice was introduced in India in October 2020 for taxpayers with Annual Aggregate Turn Over (AATO) of more than ₹500 crore
SYSTEM EXTENSION
Later in January 2021, the system was extended to taxpayers with AATO between ₹100-500 crore
30 DAYS FROM ISSUE DATE
As per the advisory from GSTN, it is mandatory to register invoices within 30 days of the document date for taxpayers with AATO above ₹10 crore
MANDATORY 2FA
It is mandatory for all taxpayers, irrespective of turnover, to use Two-Factor Authentication for e-invoice and e-way bill generation
DOCUMENT TYPES
The new rule or the restriction would be applicable for all types of documents that need IRN generation. It includes Invoices, Credit Notes or Debit Notes
IN-BUILT SYSTEM
The in-built validation in the Invoice Registration Portals would not allow users from reporting e-invoices after a 30-day window
WHO HAS NO RESTRICTIONS?
As of now, no reporting restriction is there on taxpayers with an AATO of less than ₹10 crore
WHAT DOES THE PORTAL DO?
The e-Invoice Portal returns the Signed QR code and Signed invoice back to taxpayers.
INTERNATIONAL FORMAT
The system uses standardized e-invoice format, based on international standards (UBL/PEPPOL)
E-INVOICE
Text: Vaishali R Venkat

Renault decides to acquire Nissan's 51% stake in Indian joint venture

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Renault Group of France and Nissan of Japan have signed a Framework Agreement by which Renault Group would control 100% equity in Renault Nissan Automotive India Private Ltd (RNAIPL) by acquiring 51% stake owned by Nissan in the joint venture which has it's manufacturing facility in Chennai.

An Operational Agreement has been signed to continue the current projects between Renault Group and Nissan, and to define the future relationship of Renault Group and Nissan in India.

Base for exports

Nissan will continue to use RNAIPL as a source for India and export in the coming years. This transaction is expected by the end of first half of 2025. Renault Group and Nissan will continue to operate jointly Renault Nissan Technology & Business Center India (RNTBCI) in which Nissan will retain its 49% stake and Renault Group its 51% stake.

Renault Nissan Automotive India Private Ltd will continue to produce Nissan models.

As part of its "2027 International Game Plan", Renault Group will accelerate its development in India.

Cash flow

"The year 2025 is a year of peak investments for RNAIPL, in line with the launch of new vehicles. Thus, the free cash flow impact for the year is expected to be around €200 million (taking into account its completion by the end of first half of 2025)," Renault Group said in a statement.

RNAIPL would continue to produce Nissan models, including the New Nissan Magnite.

Nissan has chosen Renault Group to develop and produce a derivative of Twingo.

The New Alliance Agreement would be amended to increase the flexibility of each party regarding their cross-shareholdings by setting the lock-up undertaking at 10% (instead of 15%).

Nissan would be released from its commitment to invest in electric vehicles company Ampere while continuing the agreed product projects.

"This Framework Agreement, beneficial for both parties, is the proof of the agile and efficient mindset of the new Alliance.," said Luca de Meo, CEO of Renault Group.

"We remain committed to the Indian market," said Ivan Espinosa, president and CEO of Nissan.

Foreign investors turn net sellers in Indian equities in 2024-25

They sold equities worth ₹1,27,041 crore in the year; they were net sellers in seven out of 12 months; the selling slowed down in March at ₹3,973 cr.

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

Foreign investors sold the most in the financial year 2024-25, barring 2022, when the outgo was led by COVID-19 pandemic, according to data from NSDL.

Foreign institutional investors sold Indian equities amounting to ₹1,27,041 crore. The net investment position in the previous fiscal was ₹2,08,212 crore. Foreign investor interest in Indian markets has been on the wane since October 2024, if the net investment position is any indication. In the fiscal 2025, foreign investors were net sellers of Indian equities in 7 out of 12 months.

The relentless selling, however, slowed in the last three months, with the March figure of ₹3,973 crore being the lowest. Analysts have been citing lower than expected earnings, currency depreciation, higher valuations, and relatively more attractive U.S. bonds among others as reasons behind the outflow. To be sure, there has been a general outflow from most of the emerging economies.

Lower earnings and higher valuations cited as reasons for selling by foreign investers.

A long-term analysis of the trend suggests that FPIs were net buyers of Indian equities in six out of the past 10 fiscals, with the quantum of equity sales increasing after 2019-20. This was much less than in the decade before, when FPIs were net buyers in nine fiscal years.

In the past five years, FPIs were net sellers in three of them. In two of these three, foreign investors buying in Indian equities was at record high levels. It hit a new record in 2020-21 followed by a record sale in the very next year, making the period between 2020-21 and 2024-25 more volatile than the period between 2014-15 and 2018-19.

Analysts say movements in both global and domestic investments will largely depend on the announcement of tariffs by the U.S.

ITC set to buy Aditya Birla arm's pulp, paper unit for ₹3,498 crore

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Board of Directors of Aditya Birla Real Estate Ltd. (ABREL) on Monday approved the sale of company's pulp and paper undertaking in Lalkuan, Uttarakhand, to ITC Ltd. for ₹3,498 crore.

R. K. Dalmia, Managing Director, Aditya Birla Real Estate Ltd, said: "The divestment is a strategic portfolio choice and unlocks value for the shareholders of ABREL." B. Sumant, Executive Director, ITC Ltd said: "The acquisition will strengthen the market standing of ITC's Paperboards and Specialty Papers Business."

INBRIEF

I-T issues demand notice of ₹20 cr. to Bosch for 2022-23

Technology and services provider Bosch Ltd. on Monday said it has received a demand notice of over ₹20 crore, including interest, from the Income Tax department for the assessment year 2022-23. In a regulatory filing, Bosch Ltd. said it has received an assessment order dated March 28 wherein a demand had been raised for ₹18.36 crore and an interest of ₹1.80 crore. The order is passed by the assessment unit of the Income Tax department. "The company is in the process of preferring an appeal. No quantification of penalty has been passed," the filing said. PTI

'Airbnb encouraging micro entrepreneurship in tourism'

Airbnb, a California-based online marketplace for holiday destinations and homestay experiences, claimed it was actively encouraging micro entrepreneurship in tourism to support local communities comprising homeowners, self-help groups, rural artisans, local grocers, local restaurants, and other grassroots-level cohorts to support the overall growth of rural economies in India. Amanpreet Singh Bajaj, country head for India & Southeast Asia told *The Hindu*: "Our aim is to promote under-served areas and build capacity in tourism. This will trigger significant growth of local economies in the country."

In M.P. AGI Greenpac to set up ₹700-cr. container glass plant

Container glass manufacturer AGI Greenpac will set up a ₹700-crore greenfield manufacturing plant in Madhya Pradesh. The expansion will strengthen the company's manufacturing footprint and complement its existing glass plants in Telangana. It will increase the firm's container glass manufacturing production capacity by 25% and help address rising demand for high-quality glass packaging products, AGI Greenpac said after board approval on Monday.

Is India firmly set to manage U.S.' Russian crude oil sanctions?

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday threatened Russia with sanctions on oil imports should it not agree to "make a deal" to cease actions in Ukraine. Speaking to United States broadcaster NBC, he exuded similar thoughts about Iran over the Islamic Republic's stand over the nuclear deal.

While oil prices have held steady for now, the chain of events could have potential implications for global oil supply, including India which relies on imports to fulfill 88.1% of its oil requirements.

Top supplier

As per an analysis by the Union Bank of India utilising sourced data, India's oil imports from its present topmost supplier, Russia, declined 14.5% sequentially in February to 1.43 million barrels a day, the lowest since January 2023.

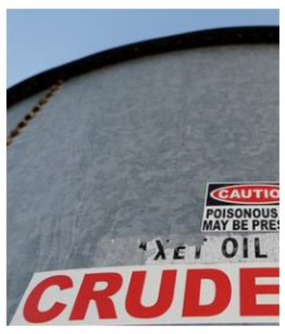
Furthermore, Russia's share in India's imports too slid to about 30% which was much lower than the 38% average in 2024.

However, imports from other key West Asian suppliers such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE also declined sequentially.

Should the Russian reversal continue, it would be a significant shift going ahead considering India raised purchase after Moscow's war with Ukraine.

India was guest to a favourable shift in the economics of this trade as Moscow was discounting the fuel to raise its attractiveness amid sanctions from the West.

Union Minister Hardeep



India's oil imports from Russia declined 14.5% in February, the lowest since January 2023.

Singh Puri, in September 2022, had underlined India would continue to buy oil from the sanctioned country. He held it as part of his 'moral duty' to the nation.

According to data from the International Energy Association (IEA), Russia supplied 0.1 mb/d crude oil to India in 2021 which surged to 1.9 mb/d in 2024. In the years between, it peaked to 2 mb/d in 2023 from 0.9 mb/d in 2022.

China was Russia's top export destination in 2024 seeking 2.4 mb/d, followed by India, Turkey (0.8 mb/d) and European Union (0.4 mb/d), among others.

Diversification strategy

India is the third largest oil importer in the world with consumption slated to continue in the upward trajectory in the future. Mr. Puri recently apprised Parliament that India was importing from 39 countries with an addition soon.

As per *Reuters* data, Iraq was India's second largest oil supplier followed by Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Underlining the approach to procurement, Mr. Puri stated, "We can leverage the market consumption cart to diversify and buy from the cheapest source."

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to public that the original sale deeds bearing no 13818 and 13819 registered at sub-registrar office peenya. The original sale deeds were lost on 19/07/2015. In this regard we have registered a police complaint, complaint no P S Crime branch: 48319/2015. The original sale deed was transferred from **Hariprasad Agarwal** to **MR Nagarajan** and **Shivashankari N** and **MR Nagarajan** and **Malar Selvi.** If anyone finds the above said documents kindly return it to, Mr. M N Padmanabhan.

Address: #27, Padhus Pride Papareddy Palya, Nagarabhavi 2nd Stage, Bangalore - 560072.
Mobile number: **9449216473**
Or to the nearest police station.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring to the notice of the general public that our client **Mr.Ajmal Zoheb S/o.Mr.Fairoz Pasha** is intending to purchase the schedule property mentioned hereunder from **Mr.Venkataswamy Reddy S/o.Late.Muni Reddy;** any person/s objecting for the proposed purchase or are having any right, title, interest or any type of claim over the scheduled property is hereby called upon to file their objections/claims what so ever along with documentary proof on or before **7 days** from the date of publication of this notice with the under mentioned advocate failing which; our clients shall proceed and complete the sale transaction with the above stated person.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the **Site No.4,** Katha No.24/4, carved out of Sy No.24, situated at **Kattigenahalli Village, Jala Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk,** measuring East to West **40 Feet** and North to South **30 Feet,** in all measuring 1200 Square Feet, BBMP Ward No.5 and bounded on the;
East By- 25 Feet Road, West by- Private Property, North by- Private No.3, South by- Property No.5

C.K.V.K. LAW ASSOCIATES
Mr. VENKATESH CHANDRAN M.A., L.L.B.
Advocates & Legal Consultants Bangalore-43
M : 9845846428, 9108784843, 080-48658774
E- Mail: rvlaw.76@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client **Mr. Anji reddy Anumolu Son of Sri. Sanjeeva Reddy Anumolu** residents of No. 1-47, Tripurapuram Village, Talarlapalle Post, Nezendla Mandal, Palandu District, AP, intends to purchase schedule property from Sri.Bhargava Lakka & Smt. Lakshmidevi.V both are residing at No.8, Matrix Layout, Near Dental College, Munnekolala, Bangalore-37. Any person, claiming to have any charge, lien, interest minor, claims, right/s whatsoever over the schedule property may lodge their claim to the undersigned with documentary proof on or before 7/03/2025 failing which my clients will treat that there are no objections or claims in respect of the schedule property no claims shall be entertained thereafter.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Ground, First, Second, Third floor and Fourth floor building No.8, formed in property No.82/8A, situated at Matrix Layout, Munnekolala, Varthur Hobli, Bangalore East taluk measuring East to West : 43.5 + 43/2 and North to South : 30 feet
and bounded on : East by : Road, West by: property of Ramesh Reddy, North by: Site No.7, South by: Site No.9

From: **VEMURI.SRINIVAS,** Advocate
MA, LLB, KAR No. 514/99
Sri. Venkateswara Rao Nilaya
Bhagawanthi Associates
No.613, Kaveri Layout, Marathalli,
Bangalore-37. Mobile : 9243110037
Mail : vsradvocate37@gmail.com
Date: 31/03/2025

THE HINDU IN SCHOOL PRESENTS SCHOOL BUZZ
A Newspaper exclusively curated for School Students

GRADUATION CEREMONY

Cluny Convent High School, Jalahalli, hosted a graceful Graduation Ceremony for Class 10 with the theme "Wings to Fly, Roots to Remember." Chief Guest Ms Bennmol Abraham, Principal Rev. Sr Janet, and Correspondent Rev. Sr Fathima led the event. The ceremony included a dignified march, lamp lighting, prayer dance, and sacred readings. Graduates shared memories, received mementoes, and pledged to uphold integrity and excellence. The Principal's inspiring address stressed the value of hard work. A farewell song, cultural performances, and a nostalgic video added charm, ending the celebration with gratitude and best wishes for the future.

DRAMA PERFORMANCE

Sri Daksha Academy's Daksha Taranga troupe, in collaboration with Karnataka Nataka Academy, performed the play Ashvaparva at the Mysore Association Theatre in Mumbai as part of the national-level Horanad Kannada Drama Festival. The performance was highly appreciated by Mumbai art lovers for its compelling acting and music. Puneeth A.S. handled the design, lighting, and direction, Hariprasad served as music director, while Vijaya Prasad and Darshan contributed vocals. The event was graced by Karnataka Nataka Academy President K. V. Nagaraj Murthy, Registrar Nirmala Mathapati, Mumbai Mysore Association Heads, and Principal Sri Dilip B.M.

GRADUATION CEREMONY

Jubilee School's Graduation Day for the 32nd SSLC batch was a grand success. Arun Kumar M.N., General Manager of Hinduja Global Solutions and a proud alumnus, delivered an inspiring address that motivated the graduates. The event featured cultural programmes, an oath-taking ceremony for new leaders, a candlelight procession, pledge, and blessing. Board members and representatives of Kerala Samajam also attended, adding to the significance of the occasion and celebrating the achievements of the graduating students.

**For Subscription related queries, please contact Raghavendra Desai:
Handphone:+91 9986196254 | Email: desai.rnb@thehindu.co.in**

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DUBAI

Iran Supreme Leader rebuffs Trump's threat over nuclear deal

AP

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the U.S. would receive a strong blow if it acts on Donald Trump's threat to bomb if Tehran does not reach a new nuclear deal. "The enmity from the U.S. and Israel has always been there. If they commit any mischief they will surely receive a strong reciprocal blow," he said. REUTERS

KATHMANDU

Nepali PM Oli holds former king responsible for last week's violence

AFP

Nepal's Prime Minister K. P. Sharma Oli on Monday held former king Gyanendra Shah responsible for last week's violence here and said the guilty would not be let off. He demanded that the former king make public his views about the violent protests organised by monarchy supporters here in the Tinkune area on Friday. PTI

JERUSALEM

Top aide to Israeli PM Netanyahu arrested in 'Qatargate' probe

AFP

Israeli police arrested two individuals, one of whom was confirmed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party as a senior aide to the long-serving leader. The two men were identified as Yonatan Urich and Eli Feldstein, involed in "Qatargate", which involves alleged payments to a Netanyahu aide from Qatar. AFP

MANDALAY

Toll from Myanmar earthquake rises to 2,056, while 3,900 missing

AFP

The death toll from a major earthquake in Myanmar has risen to 2,056, the ruling junta said, with more than 3,900 people injured. 270 more were still missing, three days after Friday's shallow 7.7-magnitude quake. This was followed by aftershocks that rattled Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city, over the weekend. AFP

Le Pen barred from seeking public office for 5 years over embezzlement

The far-right leader will remain ineligible as she appeals the verdict by a French court, and could be ruled out of the 2027 presidential race; she was among leading contenders to succeed President Emmanuel Macron at the end of his final term

Associated Press
PARIS

A French court on Monday convicted Marine Le Pen of embezzlement and barred her from seeking public office for five years – a hammer blow to the far-right leader's presidential hopes and an earthquake for French politics.

Ms. Le Pen's lawyer said she would appeal the verdict – but she will remain ineligible while she does and so could be ruled out of the 2027 presidential race. She was also sentenced to two years under house arrest.

The court ruling was a political as well as a judicial temblor for France, hobbling one of the leading contenders to succeed President Emmanuel Macron at the end of his second and final term. So broad were the political implications that even some of Ms. Le Pen's opponents reacted by saying that the Paris court had gone too far.

Sudden setback: National Rally leader Marine Le Pen arrives at the Paris courthouse for her trial verdict on Monday. AFP

Ms. Le Pen herself was not around to hear the chief judge pronounce the sentence. By then, she had already strode out of the courtroom.

Although Ms. Le Pen did not immediately comment, her supporters quickly expressed disapproval. Jordan Bardella, her 29-year-old protégé who could replace her on the ballot in 2027 if she cannot run, said on X that Ms. Le Pen "is being unjustly condemned" and that French democracy "is being executed."

The sentence could prevent Ms. Le Pen from making what would have been her fourth run for the presidency in 2027, a scenario she has previously described as a "political death." The party's most recognised figurehead and a formidable and seasoned political campaigner, Le Pen was runner-up to Mr. Macron in 2017 and 2022 presidential elections, and her party's electoral support has grown in recent years.

The verdict was a resounding defeat for Ms. Le Pen's National Rally party, formerly the National Front. She and 24 other party officials were accused of having used money intended for EU parliamentary aides to instead pay staff who worked for the party between 2004 and 2016, violating the bloc's regulations.

Trump slams Zelenskyy and Putin as truce gets delayed

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump lashed out at both Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday, expressing frustration with the Russian and Ukrainian leaders as he struggles to forge a truce to end the war.

Although Mr. Trump insisted to reporters that "we are making a lot of progress," he acknowledged that "there's tremendous hatred" between the two men, a fresh indication that negotiations may not produce the swift conclusion that he promised during the campaign.

Mr. Trump began voicing his criticisms in an early morning interview with *NBC News* while he was at Mar-a-Lago, his private club in Florida. He said he was "angry, pissed off" that Mr. Putin questioned Mr. Zelenskyy's credibility.

No respite: There are signs that the negotiations may not provide the swift conclusion promised by U.S. President Donald Trump. AP

Questioning legitimacy

The Russian leader recently said that Mr. Zelenskyy lacks the legitimacy to sign a peace deal and suggested that Ukraine needed external governance.

"I don't think he's going to go back on his word," he said. "I've known him for a long time. We've always gotten along well."

Mr. Trump soon pivoted to criticise Mr. Zelenskyy.

"He's trying to back out of the rare earth deal," Trump said, referring to negotiations over U.S. access to critical minerals in Ukraine. "And if he does that he's got some problems. Big, big problems."

Israel orders evacuation of Rafah city in Gaza's south

Associated Press
DEIR AL-BALAH

Israel's military on Monday issued sweeping evacuation orders covering Rafah and nearby areas, indicating it could soon launch another major ground operation in the Gaza Strip's southernmost city.

Israel's military ordered Palestinians to head to Muwasi, a sprawl of squalid tent camps along the coast. The orders came during Eid al-Fitr.

Netanyahu picks new security chief, defying legal challenge

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

Israel's Supreme Court had frozen incumbent Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar's dismissal

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu picked former navy commander Eli Sharvit to head the domestic security agency, his office said on Monday, despite the supreme court freezing the incumbent's dismissal.

It remains unclear when and how Mr. Sharvit could officially take charge as the court's ruling on the removal of the current Shin Bet chief, Ronen Bar, is still pending.

Mr. Netanyahu moved to sack Mr. Bar on March 21, after citing an "ongoing lack of trust" in him.

But after petitions filed by Israel's opposition and a non-governmental organisation, the supreme court suspended the dismissal of Mr. Bar, whose relationship with the government became strained after he blamed the executive for the security fiasco of Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack on Israel.

Legal experts warned that if the top court overturns Mr. Bar's dismissal, the country could face a constitutional crisis.

Opposition leader and former defence minister Benny Gantz cautioned that the country could be on the brink of a crisis by pitting the judiciary against the executive.

Mr. Gantz said that "the appointment of the head of the Shin Bet must take place only after the supreme court's ruling."

'All applicants are continuously vetted': U.S. govt. on visa revocation reports

Sriram Lakshman

Reacting to news reports that "hundreds" of Indian citizens in the U.S. had received visa revocation emails for campus activism and been told to "self deport" towards the end of last week, the U.S. State Department said it routinely invoked its authority to revoke visas when information came to light suggesting a visa holder had become ineligible to continue holding the visa.

The State Department declined to confirm the specific news reports, citing privacy reasons. It also could not confirm the number of revocations as the process was ongoing.

"The Department generally does not provide statistics on visa revocations," a State Department spokesperson told *The Hindu* over the weekend, in response to a set of questions sent to them via email.

Marco Rubio

A number of students in the U.S., including Indian citizens, have had their visas revoked. Some have been detained after the U.S. government had accused them of participating in pro-Palestine campus protests or for having sympathies with – and, in some cases, links to – militant group Hamas.

"Every prospective traveller to the United States undergoes extensive interagency security vetting. All visa applicants, no matter the visa type and where they are located, are continuously vetted," the spokesperson said.

Security vetting runs from the time an application is made all the way through the validity of the visa to ensure eligibility to travel to the U.S., they said, adding that the State Department invokes its authority to revoke visas when "information comes to light indicating that a visa holder may be no longer be eligible for a visa".

The spokesperson also referred to Secretary of State Marco Rubio's comments on the issue.

'Organised movement'

On Friday, Mr Rubio was asked about the visa consequences in a hypothetical case of a student who came to the U.S. to study without a plan to protest but over the course of their time in the U.S. developed views at odds with U.S. foreign policy and protested or wrote about it.

The Secretary suggested that there was a threshold and that visas were not going to be revoked if someone complained about "paper straws" for instance. "...You start protesting or complaining about paper straws – I mean, we're obviously not going to yank a visa over that," he said. "...We have seen on campuses across the country where students literally cannot go to school... buildings are being taken over, activities going on – this is clearly an organised movement. And if you are in this country on a student visa and are a participant in those movements, we have a right to deny your visa," he added.

Nobody had a right to a visa, Mr. Rubio said, adding that the U.S. denied visas on a daily basis across the world, for many reasons.

EDUCATION HUB

A Business Initiative

Degrees Conferred on BGS Gyms and SJB Nursing Students

Dr. Prakashanath Swamiji, MD of BGS and SJB Group of Institutions, commended the essential role nurses play in patient care, highlighting that their contribution is as significant as that of doctors in the healing process. Dr. Swamiji emphasized that nurses, who have dedicated their lives to public service, are crucial in administering care and aiding in the recovery of patients. He also encouraged the students to honor their chosen profession by serving society and upholding the welfare of others. Dr. B. A. Vishwanath, CM of Aditya Group of Educational Institutions, spoke about the vast job opportunities available for nursing students both within the state and abroad. Dr. Sarvajna Murthy Aaradhya Sachidanand, Executive Director of Siddaganga Medical College, highlighted the growing demand for nursing professionals, citing that there are over 35 lakh nurses in India. Rank holders were awarded a cash prize of Rs. 10,000, while the student with the highest marks received a cash prize of Rs 25,000.

Christ University to Launch Alumni Foundation Chapter in Australia

Christ (Deemed to be University) Bengaluru is set to strengthen its global alumni network with the launch of the Alumni Foundation Chapter in Melbourne, Australia landmark initiative aims to foster stronger alumni connections, provide support for recent graduates, and open avenues for professional and academic growth. The launch event will be graced by Dr. Johny Joseph, Registrar - Academics, Christ University, who will address the alumni community and share insights on the university's vision for global engagement. Through this initiative, Christ University aims to create a platform for continuous learning, professional development, and meaningful collaborations among its alumni in Australia. The chapter will also play a crucial role in guiding students and young graduates in their educational and career pursuits while strengthening the Christite legacy in the region. The Office of Alumni Engagement at CHRIST University, warmly invites all Christites in Australia to be part of this significant milestone and contribute to a growing global alumni network.

Presidency University hosts "Viksit Bharath Youth "Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament 2025"

The NSS Cell of Presidency University successfully organized a district-level Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament round. Participants from more than 50 colleges and universities across Bangalore Rural, Kolar, and Chikkaballapur districts took part in this event. A total of 150 candidates were selected for the district-level round. Noted social activist Brinda Adige and Ashok Kumar Tyagi-Director, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan inaugurated the two-day competition. The distinguished guests spoke about the importance of youth in the process of nation building and encouraged them to voice their opinion. Dr. Vidya Shankar Shetty-Pro VC, highlighted the importance of giving students a platform to express their thoughts which will pave the way to Viksit Bharat@2047. Ms. Renuka Bhagwat- NSS Coordinator thanked the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, National Service Scheme and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan for organizing the Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament at Presidency University. Dr. Sameena Noor Ahmed Panali-Registrar and Dr. Anu Sukhdev-Dean, Department of Student Affairs felicitated the guests and jury members on this occasion.

BMS Institute of Technology & Management, Yelahanka, Bengaluru hosted first edition of IEEE International Conference on Computing for Sustainability and Intelligent Future (Comp-SIF 2025) in association with MIET Russia and IEEE Bengaluru.

The event inaugurated by Chief Guest - Mr. Hitesh Garg, Vice President and India Country Manager NXP Semiconductor, Bengaluru, Guest of Honor Dr. Prasant Mishra Senior Scientist, TCS Research Chair Elect, IEEE Bangalore section, Sri. Aviram Sharma Trustee, BMSET Chairman, BoG, BMSIT&M, joined by couple of eminent keynote speakers. The event has received 1152 research papers from India, America, Russia, Moscow, Bangladesh, Rumenia, Nepal and other countries.

Seshadripuram Group of Institutions in association with Youth Red Cross, NCC, NSS and Rangers and Rovers unit of the college organized *Mega Voluntary Blood Donation

Sri. D.R. Patil, Veteran Co-operator and Thinker inaugurated the event and described blood donation as a life-saving act. In the presidential address, Nadoja Dr. Wooday P. Krishna, Former Member, National Managing Body, Indian Red Cross Society, President's Red Cross Gold Medal Awardee & Educationist underscored the profound impact of blood donation.

Narayana E- Techno & Olympiad School, KR Puram Celebrates Graduation Day

Graduation Day 2025 at Narayana E-Techno & Olympiad School was a day of joy, pride, and inspiration. The ceremony, held at School Premises marked a significant milestone for the graduating class of 2024-25 celebrating their dedication, perseverance, and achievements. The event was graced by esteemed dignitaries, faculty members, proud parents, and well-wishers. Under the exceptional leadership of AGM Mr. K. Venkateshwara Reddy and Principal Ms. Ambika Vijay Narayana E-Techno & Olympiad School KR Puram congratulated the students, stating, "This is not just an end but the beginning of a new journey. We are proud of our students and confident that they will leave a lasting impact in their chosen fields." The ceremony featured the awarding of medals and diplomas. As caps soared into the sky, symbolizing their transition to the next chapter, the students stepped forward with confidence, ready to embrace the future with ambition and purpose. With laughter, tears, and cheers, the Graduation Day was a testament to the power of education, dreams, and hard work. Congratulations to the Class of 2025!

RECORD HAUL

Ashwani Kumar returns best figures by an Indian on IPL debut

EMMANUAL YOGINI

Mumbai Indians' Ashwani Kumar became the first Indian to pick up a four-wicket haul on IPL debut. The left-arm pacer returned figures of four for 24 from his three overs against Kolkata Knight Riders. He sent back Ajinkya Rahane with his very first ball. Rinku Singh, Manish Pandey and Andre Russell were his other victims.

THE HIDDEN HAND

Skipper Hardik highlights scouts' role in MI unearthing talent

EMMANUAL YOGINI

With our team, it's pretty sorted about the players we back... it's all because of the scouts. All MI scouts have gone all the places and picked these young kids. We played a practice game and it looked like he (Ashwani Kumar) had that zip and late swing. He had a different action and plus he is a leftie — MI skipper Hardik Pandya.

PENALTY

RR skipper Parag fined ₹12 lakh for slow over-rate against CSK

RITU RAJ KONWAR

Rajasthan Royals captain Riyan Parag has been fined ₹12 lakh for maintaining a slow over-rate during his team's six-run victory over Chennai Super Kings at Guwahati on Sunday. "As this was his team's first offence of the season under Article 2.22 of the IPL's Code of Conduct, Parag was fined ₹12 lakh," the IPL said in a release.

WORLD-CLASS

'Shreyas one of the best short-format players'

VIJAY SONEJI

Punjab Kings fast bowling coach James Hopes hailed the batting ability of his team's skipper Shreyas Iyer. "His batting is world-class. With what he's done at the Champions Trophy, he can now be considered one of the best short-format players in the world," said Hopes ahead of the match against Lucknow Super Giants.

Ashwani burst, Rickelton blitz help Mumbai Indians blow away KKR

Deepak Chahar and Boult too strike up front as Knight Riders fold for 116; the home team makes short work of the chase to open its account

IPL-18

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Ashwani Kumar – the latest product of Mumbai Indians' talent-scouting factory – hogged the limelight. Ryan Rickelton lived up to the billing as a ferocious hitter for the first time in the season. And the home spectators returned to shower love on the captain and his blue army.

It culminated in MI opening its Indian Premier League 2025 account in style, with a facile eight-wicket win against Kolkata Knight Riders at the Wankhede Stadium on Monday.

Ashwani, the left-arm seamer, emerged as the surprise package from a four-pronged pace pack to derail Knight Riders.

Riding on his four-wicket haul – something that he had not achieved in senior domestic cricket thus far for Punjab – Mumbai Indians bundled KKR out for a paltry 116.

Despite losing Rohit Sharma – who came in as an Impact Player – Rickelton's power-hitting meant the home team crossed the line with 43 balls to spare.

Architects: Debutant Ashwani rattled KKR's strong batting line-up while Rickelton took MI home with ease. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Flavour of the day

Ashwani, though, was the flavour of the day. With Trent Boult and Deepak Chahar having accounted for the KKR openers in their opening overs, Knight Riders' hopes relied on captain Ajinkya Rahane.

But the first ball of the fourth over – bowled by Ashwani – pitched wide outside off stump, Rahane sliced it and Tilak Varma held on to the top-edge on the second attempt.

Breakthrough

When he was reintroduced in the 11th over, Knight Riders were banking on Rinku Singh and Manish Pandey – brought in as an Impact Player with them tottering at 45 for five in seven overs – to stage a recovery.

But Ashwani saw the back of Rinku (sliced to Nam Dhir at deep point) and Manish (bowled off the pads) to rattle the defending champion. The dream debut got just better in his next over, with Andre Russell missing a full ball altogether to see his woodwork being disturbed.

Chasing a modest target, Rickelton flourished on his maiden match at the Wankhede.

His heroics - with successive sixes off Sunil Narine being the highlights – and Suryakumar Yadav's cameo meant the home crowd went home happy at the end of a long weekend.

Points table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Royal Challengers	2	2	0	4	2.266
Delhi Capitals	2	2	0	4	1.320
Lucknow Super Giants	2	1	1	2	0.963
Gujarat Titans	2	1	1	2	0.625
Punjab Kings	1	1	0	2	0.550
Mumbai Indians	3	1	2	2	0.309
Chennai Super Kings	3	1	2	2	-0.771
Sunrisers Hyderabad	3	1	2	2	-0.871
Rajasthan Royals	3	1	2	2	-1.112
Kolkata Knight Riders	3	1	2	2	-1.428

** Till the MI-KKR match on March 31*

Next assignment

KKR: April 3 vs SRH
Kolkata, 7.30 p.m.

MI: April 4 vs LSG
Lucknow, 7.30 p.m.

SCOREBOARD

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS
Quinton de Kock c Ashwani b Chahar 1 *(3b)*, Sunil Narine b Boult 0 *(2b)*, Ajinkya Rahane c Tilak b Ashwani 11 *(7b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Angkrish Raghuvanshi c Dhir b Hardik 26 *(16b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Venkatesh Iyer c Rickelton b Chahar 3 *(9b)*, Rinku Singh c Dhir b Ashwani 17 *(14b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Manish Pandey **(Impact Player for Raghuvanshi)** b Ashwani 19 *(14b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Andre Russell b Ashwani 5 *(11b, 1x4)*, Ramandeep Singh c Hardik b Santner 22 *(12b, 1x4, 2x6)*, Harshit Rana c Dhir b Vignesh 4 *(8b)*, Spencer Johnson (not out) 1 *(3b)*; Extras (lb-2, nb-1, w-4): 7; Total (in 16.2 overs): 116.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-1 (Narine, 0.4 overs), 2-2 (de Kock, 1.1), 3-25 (Rahane, 3.1), 4-41 (Venkatesh, 5.4), 5-45 (Raghuvanshi, 6.6), 6-74 (Rinku, 10.3), 7-80 (Pandey, 10.6), 8-88 (Russell, 12.4), 9-99 (Harshit, 14.3).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING
Boult 4-0-23-1, Chahar 2-0-19-2, Ashwani 3-0-24-4, Hardik 2-0-10-1, Vignesh 2-0-21-1, Santner 3.2-0-17-1.

MUMBAI INDIANS
Rohit Sharma **(Impact Player for Vignesh)** c Harshit b Russell 13 *(12b, 1x6)*, Ryan Rickelton (not out) 62 *(41b, 4x4, 5x6)*, Will Jacks c Rahane b Russell 16 *(17b, 1x6)*, Suryakumar Yadav (not out) 27 *(9b, 3x4, 2x6)*; Extras (nb-2, w-1): 3; Total (for two wkts. in 12.5 overs): 121.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-46 (Rohit, 5.2), 2-91 (Jacks, 10.4).

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING
Johnson 2-0-14-0, Harshit 2-0-28-0, Varun 3-0-12-0, Russell 2.5-0-35-2, Narine 3-0-32-0.

Toss: MI.
PoM: Ashwani.
MI won by eight wickets with 43 balls to spare.

'Dhoni decides his batting slot based on match situation'

Big call: Dhoni's batting position has come under the microscope. RITU RAJ KONWAR

Press Trust of India
GUWAHATI

Mahendra Singh Dhoni can't bat 10 overs running full stick as his knee remains dodgy and the former captain decides on his batting position based on the match situation, revealed Chennai Super Kings coach Stephen Fleming.

The 43-year-old Dhoni had faced criticism for batting at number nine during CSK's 50-run loss to Royal Challengers Bengaluru at Chepauk last week.

On Sunday, the CSK talisman walked out at number seven with the team needing 54 off 25 balls but could manage just 16 runs off 11 balls as they suffered a six-run loss to Rajasthan Royals.

"It's a time thing. MS judges it. His body, his knees aren't what they used to be.

"He's moving okay but there's still a nutrition aspect to it. He can't bat 10 overs running full stick. So he will gauge on the day what he can give us," Fleming said at the post-match press conference.

"If the game's in the balance like today, he will go a little bit earlier and he backs other players when other opportunities are up. So he's balancing that.

"I said it last year, he's too valuable to us, (with his) leadership and wicket-keeping, to throw him in at nine-10 overs.

"He's actually never done that. So look, from around 13, 14 overs he's looking to go, depending on who's in".

Buoyant Super Giants eye a good show against high-flying Kings at the Ekana

Pranay Rajiv
LUCKNOW

A buoyant Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) will look to kick off its IPL 2025 home campaign with a win against Punjab Kings at the Ekana Stadium here on Tuesday.

LSG comes into the fixture on the back of a stunning away win against Sunrisers Hyderabad, in a game where the pre-match odds were stacked heavily against it.

Punjab Kings too has wind in its sails, gained from edging Gujarat Titans in a high-scoring thriller a week ago.

The centrepiece of Kings' pre-match planning for Tuesday will likely be LSG's batting talisman Nicholas Pooran, the leading run-scorer this edition.

The West Indian batter has been on the rampage, scoring 145 runs in two games at a staggering strike rate of 258.92, smashing 12 fours and 13 sixes.

On the rampage: Pooran has been in sparkling form for LSG at No. 3. SANDEEP SAXENA

On Tuesday, Pooran and Co. will be up against a Kings bowling attack which nearly fumbled in a 243-run defence against Titans.

To make it worse for Kings, Pooran enjoys a sturdy match-up against Yuzvendra Chahal, their lead spinner. The leg-spinner has dismissed the left-handed batter just once in T20s while conceding 127 runs at a strike rate of 167.10.

Kings' batting efforts will be led by captain Shreyas Iyer who scored a free-stroking 42-ball unbeaten 97 against Titans on his team debut.

Both teams will be wary of the generally sluggish nature of the Lucknow surface.

Since 2023, Ekana has had the lowest run-rate (8.17) among all grounds in the IPL.

Today's match

Lucknow, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 4
LSG 3 | PBKS 1

PREVIOUS MEETING
LSG won by **21 runs**, 2024

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIOHOTSTAR

Fine to have home-ground advantage, says Hopes

Pranay Rajiv
LUCKNOW

Punjab Kings fast bowling coach James Hopes vouched for home advantage in cricket ahead of his side's IPL match against Lucknow Super Giants here at the Ekana Stadium on Tuesday.

"I think it's fine to have a home-ground advantage. If you have a spin-heavy attack, you can play on a spinning wicket, that's fine.

"Ultimately, you only play one game there [at an away ground]. You've just got to prepare accordingly and try to combat that," said Hopes at the pre-match press conference.

Hopes also reckoned the Lucknow pitch will be a good one while admitting that it might play out in line with the home team's bowling combination.

"At the moment, it looks pretty good. It's changed a lot over the last few days.

Lethal weapon: Arshdeep's presence gives the Kings bowling attack the cutting edge. SANDEEP SAXENA

We know that they [LSG] have had their injuries on the pace front. We know they were spin-heavy in the first game. We'll just have to wait and see whether they go spin heavy again," added Hopes.

LSG all-rounder Shahbaz Ahmed opined that the Ekana surface will provide for an even battle between bat and ball.

"I feel this pitch will help both batters and bowlers. Also, this is a big ground, which will help the bowlers. It might aid pacers in the beginning, but batters will have their chances later on.

"Compared to other grounds, I think Ekana will favour the bowlers. It might be high-scoring, but it won't be like Hyderabad or other grounds," said Shahbaz.

INBRIEF

Bagnaia wins USA MotoGP after Marc Marquez crashes

Francesco Bagnaia won an eventful Grand Prix of the Americas in Austin on Sunday to end crash-victim Marc Marquez's perfect start to the MotoGP season. Six-time elite champion Marquez was set fair to make it six wins out of six in Texas. But a crash on lap nine did it for the Spanish superstar, gifting victory to his Ducati factory teammate with Alex Marquez taking second to move to the top of the world championship.

Deepak Punia bags 92kg freestyle silver

Asian Games silver medallist Deepak Punia secured a silver in the Asian wrestling championships in Amman. Deepak lost 0-10 to Iranian defending champion Amirhossein Firouzpourbandpei in the men's 92kg freestyle final. Dinesh ensured another podium finish after pipping Turkmenistan's Zyyamuhammet Saparov 14-12 in a 125kg bronze medal contest. Indian freestyle wrestlers collected two silver medals and a bronze. Overall, the country bagged one gold, three silver and six bronze medals.

Rajgir officially confirmed as venue for Men's Asia Cup 2025

Rajgir was officially named as the venue for the 2025 Men's Asia Cup after Hockey India signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the same with the Bihar State Sports Authority on Monday. The eight-team tournament, a qualifying event for the 2026 World Cup, will be held from August 29-September 7 at the Rajgir Sports Complex and will be the second big ticket event at the venue after the Women's Asian Champions Trophy last year. *The Hindu* was the first to report about the same back in November. Besides India, Pakistan, Japan, Korea, China and Malaysia will be participating to book a World Cup spot with two teams qualifying from the AHF Cup.

— **Uthra Ganesan**

Brathwaite steps down as West Indies Test captain

Kraigg Brathwaite has stepped down as skipper of the West Indies Test team after four years in charge, Cricket West Indies said on Monday after a shift in leadership roles saw Shai Hope taking over captaincy of the T20I side. Hope, the team's ODI skipper, replaced Rovman Powell for T20I captaincy.

Jason-Thimmanna wins Thailand National Rally C'ship

Mangaluru's Jason Saldanha and Kodagu's Thimmanna Uddapanda won the first round of the Thailand National Rally Championship (RAAT) in RC 2.1 class, at Nakhon Ratchasima in Bangkok on Sunday. Driving a Suzuki Swift 1.4L turbo for Team Insight & Ally, they made it their second consecutive victory at the RAAT. They clocked an overall time of one hour, 32.20s for the total distance of 81.50km including a competitive stage distance of 38.63km spread across eight Stages. They finished a creditable second in the overall category.

Berwal helming Indian team at World Boxing Cup

Asian Games bronze medallist Narender Berwal is headlining a 10-member Indian men's boxing team that was handed a mixed draw at the inaugural World Boxing Cup in Foz do Iguacu (Brazi). This will be the first event hosted by World Boxing since receiving provisional recognition from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in February and the inclusion of the sport in the 2028 LA Olympics. It will be the first time Indian boxers compete internationally in the new weight categories. The six-day tournament will feature over 130 boxers, including Olympians, from 19 countries.

The team: Jadumani S. Mandengbam (50kg), Manish Rathore (55kg), Sachin Siwach (60kg), Abhinash Jamwal (65kg), Hitesh (70kg), Nikhil Dubey (75kg), Lakshya Chahar (80kg), Jugnoo (85kg), Vishal (90kg), Narender Berwal (90+kg).

LIVE TELECAST

Premier League: SS Select 1, 2 (SD & HD) & JioHotstar, 12.15 a.m. , 12.30 a.m. (Wednesday)

NZ vs Pakistan: 2nd ODI, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 3.30 a.m. (Wednesday)

Mensik stuns Djokovic to win maiden ATP Tour title

The Czech teenager clinches both sets in tie-breaker in a final delayed by almost six hours; the 24-time Grand Slam champ, troubled by an eye infection, has to wait for his 100th career crown

MIAMI OPEN

Agence France-Presse
MIAMI GARDENS

Winning feeling! Mensik produced an outstanding display of power game in the biggest match of his career. AP

Czech teenager Jakub Mensik upset Novak Djokovic 7-6(4), 7-6 (4) to win the Miami Open at Hard Rock Stadium on Sunday, denying the Serb his 100th career title.

The 19-year-old, ranked 54th in the world, claimed his first title on the ATP Tour with an outstanding display of power game.

The final was delayed by almost six hours due to heavy rain and when the players emerged it was clear that Djokovic had an eye infection. He used eye-drops during a changeover in the first set.

Mensik started strongly, breaking Djokovic's first serve game to go 2-0 up and the tall, big-serving Czech was dominating until, at 4-2 Djokovic broke back when Mensik found the net.

The set remained on serve from then on, but in the tie-break Mensik's powerful serve, with two aces, put him in charge from the outset. He opened up a 5-0 lead and although 24-time Grand Slam champion Djokovic fought back the youngster sealed the set with an overhead volley.

It was the first set that Djokovic had lost in the entire tournament. Twice he lost his footing and ended up on his back, and he changed his footwear between sets.

Mensik had beaten Djokovic by the exact same margin in the first set of their only other meeting in Shanghai before losing in three sets. This time, however, the momentum appeared to be with him.

The second set was a nip and tuck affair, though, with neither player able to break. Once again Mensik's power proved decisive in the tie-break and when Djokovic went long on a return to hand him victory he fell to his back in celebration. "To be honest I don't know what to say. It feels incredible, obviously," Mensik said in his on-court interview.

"It was probably the biggest day of my life and I did super, which I'm really glad (about), to show the performance and keep the nerves outside of the court before the match. I feel just super happy and I think that the feelings will come later," he said.

Jyoti, Dipanshu among favourites

ATHLETICS

Sports Bureau

With the top Indian track and field stars prioritising the Federation Cup later this month, the first Indian Open athletics meet in Sangrur on Tuesday will be a chance for some of the rising stars to push themselves and improve performances.

Among those will be Jyoti Rakesh, the 22-year old champion at the National Games and considered among the more talented of the next generation javelin throwers.

Dipanshu will be among the few exciting talents at the competition that has only a couple of experienced names entered for participation

Jyoti, targeting the 58m mark to qualify for the Asian Championships – her best is 58.49m, the all-time fifth best Indian throw – will be among the favourites.

As will be Dipanshu Sharma, the Asian Under-20 champion last year and, although his personal best is still only 71.21m, is highly rated to join the 80m club this year.

Along with Rohan Yadav – silver medallist at the Asian meet – Dipanshu will be among the few exciting talents at the competition that has only a couple of experienced names entered for the participation.

These include Sarthak Bhambri in the 400m and Tanya Chaudhary in the women's hammer throw at the War Hero Stadium.

Competitions will be held in all throws, high jump and triple jump along with track races from 400-10,000m for men and 400m, 5000m and 10,000m for women.

Prasidh takes a leaf out of Hardik's book

Big arsenal: Prasidh used his variations to the T. VIJAY SONEJI

IPL-18

Pranay Rajiv
AHMEDABAD

Hardik Pandya must have been a content man midway through the IPL 2025 match between Gujarat Titans and Mumbai Indians on Saturday.

Hardik bowled better than anyone in his team to ensure his former side ended four runs short of the 200-run mark.

He relied on his slower variations - 16 off his 24 deliveries in the night were off-cutters - to end with figures of two for 29.

But unwittingly, Hardik offered the opposition a template on how to bowl on a fresh black-soil pitch. Soon enough it was replicated in a far more devastating fashion by Prasidh Krishna.

Prasidh gave away just 18 runs in his four overs, accounting for both Mumbai Indians' top scorers, Suryakumar Yadav and Tilak Varma to propel his side to a 36-run win.

The 29-year-old quick followed the Hardik model by bowling 11 off-cutters, giving away just eight runs from them. Prasidh admitted that his plan was based on his first-innings observations.

"We were watching how the first innings went. Cutters into the wicket were doing well and the plan was to make sure I use those lengths.

"I just figured that was working," said Prasidh after the game.

After being introduced in the 12th over, the Karnataka pacer bowled three overs on the trot, conceding just eight runs to kill off MI's chase.

Just like Hardik, Prasidh refrained from pitching it up, allowing the ball to grip on a surface offering variable bounce.

While the MI skipper bowled three full-length deliveries, the Titans pacer delivered just two.

High praise

Rightfully, Prasidh was singled out for some praise from his skipper Shubman Gill.

"He did a pretty amazing job for us. I think he changed the game. To come in like that in a pressure situation and bowl the way he bowled [is brilliant]".

Napoli downs Milan, keeps pressure on Inter

Crucial: Lukaku's 19th-minute goal doubled Napoli's advantage. AFP

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
MILAN

Napoli stayed on the heels of Serie A leader Inter Milan on Sunday after beating AC Milan 2-1 to remain three points off the pace in the Scudetto race.

Antonio Conte's side was ahead with a minute on the clock through Matteo Politano's thumping low finish, and once Romelu Lukaku scuffed in his 400th career goal in the 19th minute the host had a big enough cushion to claim the three points.

This was after Inter squeezed past Udinese 2-1 earlier. Inter coach Simone Inzaghi conceded that nerves took control as his side looked shaky towards the end of its win, with goalkeeper Yann Sommer proving crucial to its eventual success.

Inter took a 2-0 lead through goals from Marko Arnautovic and Davide Frattesi but relied on Sommer to save the three points later in the game.

The Inter coach was sent off in stoppage time having seen his second yellow card of the night after losing his cool and entering the pitch with heated gestures towards the referee. "I made a mistake at the end, I apologised to the referee," Inzaghi said.

The results: Serie A: Inter Milan 2 (Arnautovic 12, Frattesi 29) bt Udinese 1 (Solet 71); Napoli 2 (Politano 2, Lukaku 19) bt AC Milan 1 (Jovic 82).

LaLiga: Valencia 1 (Lopez 50) bt Mallorca 0; Athletic Bilbao 0 drew with Osasuna 0; Real Betis 2 (Cardoso 25, Cucho 45+3) bt Sevilla 1 (Vargas 17). **Bundesliga:** Borussia Dortmund 3 (Beier 39, 72, Can 42) bt Mainz 1 (Nebel 76).

Karun debuts as author with *Drive to Victory*, a book on Formula One

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

Former Formula One driver Karun Chandhok has come up with debut book *Drive to Victory*, introducing young fans to the fast-paced world of Formula One, the pinnacle of single-seater motorsports.

Karun, the second Indian to drive in Formula One, is currently a renowned commentator working for Sky Sports in the UK and travels to races worldwide.

"Growing up here, I depended on *Autosport*, which used to come a few weeks late to know about the sport.

"But now, after Netflix's 'Drive to Survive', there has been a huge interest in F1, and they have access to all the latest news. But at the same time, many don't know about the rich history and names like Michael Schumacher.

"When I go to races, fans don't recognise some great drivers and past champions who are at the circuits.

"So the book is an attempt to introduce the new fans to the sport's history and interesting trivia about cars, race tracks and more," said Karun on Sunday. "I wrote this book during my flight travels last year, and it is written in a way [that is] accessible to young kids.

"I was inspired to write it based on the questions my son asks me watching the races," added the 41-year-old, who held book signing events at Higginbothams and Odyssey stores.

BENGALURU ROUND-UP

Prem Kumar powers Zodiac CC into semis

Prem Kumar's all-round effort (4/16 & 74 n.o.) helped Zodiac CC defeat Mathikere CC by two wickets to enter the semifinals of the KSCA (Group I) fifth division league.

The scores: Super 242/9 in 50 overs (J.P. Ronel 46, Raj Kumar 51, Anagh Skanda Bhardwaj 78 n.o.) lost to Kapali 244/8 in 49.1 overs (V. Rahul 29, Ebrahim 26, H. Vishwa 82, K.V. Chethan 40, Yuvaan Jain 4/5).

Mathikere 223 in 49.5 overs (Ram N. Chauhan 27, Rajeev Bhaskar 56, Rajkumar Rana 66, Prem Kumar 4/16) lost to Zodiac 224/8 in 49.4 overs

(Shoheb Pasha 26, Prem Kumar 74 n.o., Balu Dilip Kumara 33). Johnson 169 in 40.2 overs (P. Shashank 29, Yashash S. Rao 32, M. Naveen 25, D. Pradhan Shekar 26, S.H. Nagesh 28, M.K. Hemesh 4/37)

Triumphant: The victorious RIT basketball team. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

lost to Southern Cricketers 170/7 in 35.4 overs (Abhishek Arun Bandekar 42, A.V. Manoj 36 n.o., M. Manjesh 3/32).

Friends Union Cricketers, KGF 262/8 in 50 overs (Imran Khan 87, B.R. Yatish Kumar 50, K.R. Kishore 4/33) bt Friends CC 172 in 48.5 overs (Poorna 48, K.R. Kishore 36, Santosh Kumar Singh 4/30).

Bangalore Dream United posts easy win

Bangalore Dream United FC blanked BTM FC 3-0 in the BDFA A-division league football here on Monday.

The results: A-div: RWF FC 1 (S. Rajesh 56) drew with DYES FC 1 (Ajay Shankar Kadam 46); Bangalore Dream United FC 3 (Jai Hari Barman 65, Londup Lepcha 80, K. Lalrinfela 80+2) bt BTM FC 0.

C-div: Pillanna Garden FC bt Bosch FC 6-1; Town SC Hoskote FC bt Southern Blues FC 3-0.

Ramaiah Institute of Technology emerges champion

Ramaiah Institute of Technology beat Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology, Nagpur 75-57 to win the All India inter-collegiate basketball championship conducted by BITS Pilani Goa Campus.

The result: RIT, Bengaluru 75 (Joshua 22, Pranesh 15, Kanishka 16) bt VNIT, Maharashtra 57 (Sahil 18, Ishwar 18).